

DERLETH

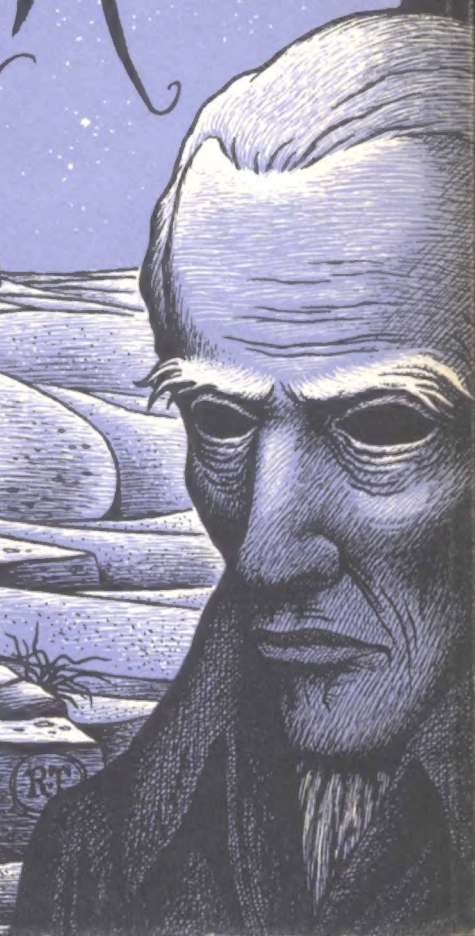
The
TRAIL
of
THORUS

The TRAIL of THORUS

ARKHAM
HOUSE

AUGUST DERLETH

(R)



THE TRAIL OF CTHULHU

By AUGUST DERLETH

To the Cthulhu Mythos, that curious myth-pattern developed by the late H. P. Lovecraft, August Derleth has added many stories, but none as comprehensive in its allusions as this novel in five related episodes. The Cthulhu Mythos has not hitherto been evolved to the clarity with which it is seen in this novel of *outré* horror, and at least one of the characters in this story—Dr. Laban Shrewsbury—is a distinguished addition to the pantheon of gods and men created by Lovecraft for the entertainment of those devotees of the macabre who read his tales with delight.

The story is of the devious pursuit of Cthulhu, the search for his lair in sunken R'lyeh, of the danger from Cthulhu's minions ever wary of detection and disclosure. It begins in a house on Curwen Street in legend-haunted Arkham, Massachusetts—it ends on a shunned and mysterious island in the South Pacific, after having ranged from the Inca ruins near Machu Pichu to London, from the Nameless City of Irem—in a memorable scene evoking the shade of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred—to Singapore, in a colorful and dramatic sequence of events which in sum fit into place more pieces in the mosaic of the Mythos than any fiction written since Lovecraft's untimely death.

A skilled pastichist and a master of the macabre in his own right, August Derleth here adds to and continues the lore of dark wonder and mysterious terror that is the core of the Cthulhu Mythos—borrowing now from Lovecraft, now adding something of his own, tying together loose ends left free by Lovecraft, expanding to new arenas of his own. This account of Dr. Laban Shrewsbury's dedicated mission is integral to the Cthulhu story, and one no reader given to the dark delight of the vast and arcane legendry of imaginary worlds will want to miss.

No one but August Derleth could have captured so skillfully the mood and design of H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos and yet done so in a manner all his own.

* * * * *

Richard Taylor, the distinguished artist and cartoonist, author of *The Better Taylors*, *By the Dawn's Ugly Light*, *R. Taylor's Wrong Bag*, and illustrator of many other books, designed the jacket.

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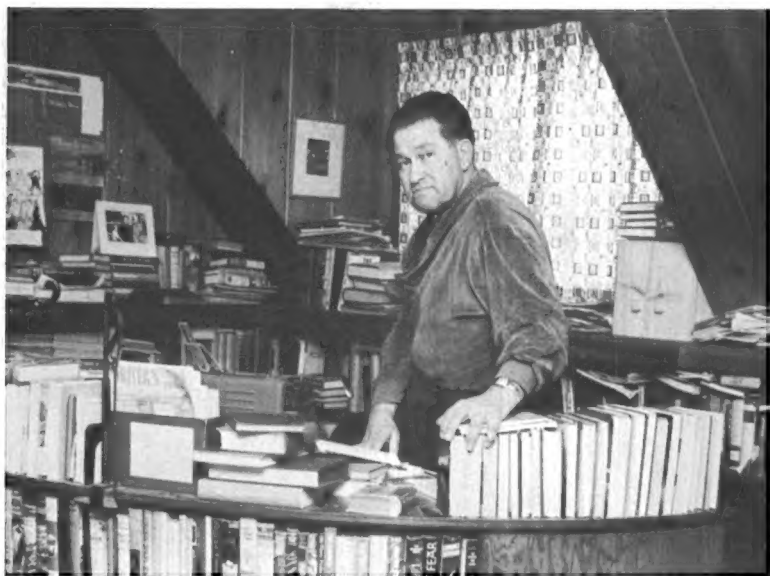
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AUGUST DERLETH AT HIS DESK

AUGUST DERLETH has published over a hundred books with *The Trail of Cthulhu*, the first book—in chronological publication—of his second hundred. His work ranges with remarkable versatility over the entire field of writing; he has written and anthologized poetry, macabre fiction, science fiction; his byline appears on historical and modern novels, short story collections, histories, biographies, juveniles, etc., etc. Current books include *Concord Rebel: A Life of Henry D. Thoreau* and *Dark Mind, Dark Heart*, an anthology of new horror tales; immediately pending are *The Tent Show Summer*, a new work in the popular Steve & Sim junior novels series, and *The Shadow in the Glass*, a new historical novel in the Wisconsin Saga. He has also recently made two recordings—*Psyche*, a sequence of love lyrics, and *Sugar Bush by Moonlight and Other Poems of Man and Nature*.

August Derleth is also editor/owner of Arkham House, literary editor of, and columnist (*Wisconsin Diary*) for *The Capital Times* of Madison, Wisconsin, and *Chicago Book & Whippoorwill*, a little review of poetry. With his two
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Derleth

THE TRAIL OF CTHULHU

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THE TRAIL OF CTHULHU

for devotees of the macabre, August Derleth has also written

SOMEONE IN THE DARK
SOMETHING NEAR
NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD
THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD (with H. P. Lovecraft)
THE SURVIVOR AND OTHERS (with H. P. Lovecraft)
THE MASK OF CTHULHU
LONESOME PLACES

and has edited

SLEEP NO MORE
WHO KNOCKS?
THE NIGHT SIDE
THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD
STRANGE PORTS OF CALL
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON
BEYOND TIME AND SPACE
FAR BOUNDARIES
THE OUTER REACHES
NIGHT'S YAWNING PEAL
BEACHHEADS IN SPACE
WORLDS OF TOMORROW
DARK OF THE MOON
TIME TO COME
PORTALS OF TOMORROW
FIRE AND SLEET AND CANDLELIGHT
DARK MIND, DARK HEART

* * * * *

In Preparation:

THE WIND IN THE CEDARS
HARRIGAN'S FILE
COLONEL MARKESAN AND LESS PLEASANT PEOPLE
(with Mark Schorer)

*The Trail
of
Cthulhu*

by

AUGUST DERLETH



Arkham House: Publishers

1962

Sauk City, Wisconsin

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To the memory of
Howard Phillips Lovecraft,
in whose work is to be found the beginnings of this novel.

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THE TRAIL OF CTHULHU

I.

THE HOUSE ON CURWEN STREET

being

The Manuscript of Andrew Phelan

(The controversial Phelan Manuscript, found in the room from which Andrew Phelan so strangely vanished during the night of September 1, 1938, has at last been conditionally released for publication by the Library of Miskatonic University at Arkham, Massachusetts, which had requested it from the Boston police files. It is reproduced here by express permission of Dr. Llanfer of the library staff, with the exception only of certain deletions whose suggestiveness was too terrible, and whose concepts too alien to contemporary mankind to permit of publication.)

1.

"Man must be prepared to accept notions of the cosmos, and of his own place in the seething vortex of time, whose merest mention is paralyzing. He must, too, be placed on guard against a specific, lurking peril which, though it will never engulf the whole race, may impose monstrous and unguessable horrors upon certain venturesome members of it."—H. P. Lovecraft.

IT WOULD NOT BE in error to maintain that my recent experiences were a direct outgrowth of the advertisement in the Personals column of *The Saturday Review*, for the advertisement was unusual and provocative. I saw it first on a day when I was not certain from what source my next week's board and lodging were coming; it was unpretentious, but there was in it a curious note

of challenge which I found it difficult to ignore. I read down the column and came back to it.

"Young man of brawn, brain and limited imagination. If with modicum of secretarial ability, apply to 93 Curwen Street, Arkham, Mass. for information which may be of monetary advantage."

Arkham was only a few hours from Boston—an old city whose clustering gambrel roofs had once concealed hunted witches, whose changelessness lent itself to strange tales of haunts and legends, whose narrow streets along the Miskatonic River were sentient with the very presence of past centuries, of people who had lived there and had been dust for long decades—and it was pleasant to find myself once more within its boundaries early that June evening. I had philosophically packed all such worldly goods as I felt might be necessary to keep me in the position—if I suited the advertiser—until I myself knew that I could fill it to my own satisfaction; and I carried them in one stout suitcase, which I checked at the bus station immediately on my arrival there. After a light repast, I sought out a city directory and ascertained the identity of the inhabitant of 93 Curwen Street, whose name was given as Dr. Laban Shrewsbury.

Acting on the intuitive conviction that Dr. Shrewsbury might be a person of some consequence, I took myself to the reference rooms of Miskatonic University and made inquiry, as a result of which I was directed not only to a local file on him, but also to a book he had written and published two years ago. The file was informative to an exceptional degree; I learned that Dr. Shrewsbury was a student of mysticism, a lecturer in occult sciences, a teacher of philosophy, an authority on myth and religious patterns of ancient peoples. His book, I am ashamed to confess, was far less informative; it was in large part beyond me. It bore the forbidding title of *An Investigation Into the Myth-Patterns of*

Latterday Primitives With Especial Reference to the R'lyeh Text, and the merely cursory glances which I was able to give it conveyed nothing whatever to me, save the fact that my prospective employer was engaged upon some kind of research which ought, if not precisely within my sphere, to be at least not uncongenial to me. Armed with this information, I set out for Curwen Street.

The house I sought differed little from other houses on its street; indeed, it had so similar an aspect that it might have been one of a row all designed by the same unimaginative architect and constructed by the same builders. It was large without giving the appearance of largeness; its windows were casement windows, and small; its many gables receded into roofs that seemed to sway and sag; and it was weather-stained without having the appearance of being in sore need of paint. Moreover, it was set between gnarled trees, both of an indeterminate age, but seemingly quite ancient, older in fact than the house, which had about it an aura of age that was almost tangible. At this time of the day—the hour was that last hour of dusk, when the deeper twilight invades country lanes and city streets like a kind of just perceptible smoke—the house had an almost sinister appearance, but this I knew to be the inevitable effect of the ever-changing light.

There was no glow from any of the windows, and I stood briefly on the stoop wondering whether I might have chosen an inopportune time to call on my prospective employer. But I had not, for even as I raised my hand to knock, the door swung open, and I found myself facing an elderly man who wore his hair long and white, but had neither moustache nor beard, thus revealing a firm, almost prognathous chin, half-pursed lips, and a strong Roman nose. His eyes were not visible at all, for he wore dark glasses with shields which prevented one from seeing his eyes even from the side.

"Dr. Shrewsbury?"

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

"My name is Andrew Phelan. I came in answer to your advertisement in *The Saturday Review*."

"Ah. Come in. You're just in time."

I did not attach any significance to this cryptic statement, other than to assume that he had been expecting someone else—as indeed he had, for so he soon informed me—and wished only to say that I came in good time for an interview, before his expected visitor turned up. I followed him into a dimly-lit hall, so feebly illumined that I had to go cautiously lest I stumble, and presently found myself in the old man's study, a high-ceilinged room which contained many books, not only on shelves, but strewn all over on floor, chairs, and the old man's desk. The professor waved me to a chair and himself sat down at his desk. He began immediately to ply me with questions.

Could I read Latin and French? Yes, I could read both languages with some facility. Could I box and did I know jiu-jitsu? Happily, I had some knowledge of both. He seemed particularly concerned about my imagination, and repeatedly asked curious questions which seemed designed to reveal to him whether I could be easily frightened, never once asking me directly. He explained that he had occasion to pursue his studies in strange, out-of-the-way places, and was often put in some personal danger from roughs and thugs, and for that purpose he required a secretary-companion who would act as a bodyguard should the necessity—admittedly remote—arise. Could I transcribe conversation? I believed I could do so reasonably well. He hoped I was familiar with certain dialects, and seemed gratified when I revealed that I had studied philology at Harvard.

"You may wonder," he said then, "at my insistence about lack of imagination, but my researches and experiments are of so outré a character that a too imaginative companion might well be able

to grasp enough of the fundamentals to suspect the cosmic revelations which might come of my work. Candidly, I must take precautions to prevent anything of that nature from happening."

I had been aware for some time of something vaguely disquieting about Dr. Shrewsbury; I could not ascertain what it was, nor what basis it had in my awareness. Perhaps it was that I could obtain no glimpse of his eyes; certainly it was disconcerting to be faced by those opaque black glasses which gave no hint of sight; but it did not seem to be that; it seemed rather to be something that was almost psychic and, had I been given to an easy submission to intuition, I would have withdrawn. For there was something markedly strange here; I needed no imagination to sense it; there was an aura of fear and awe about the room in which I sat, oddly incongruous with the musty smell of books and old papers, and there was above all an insistent and absurd impression of being in a place apart and away from all other human habitation, like a house of dread in a remote forest, or a place of insecurity in a borderland between darkness and daylight instead of a prosaic old dwelling along one of the river streets in ancient Arkham.

Quite as if he sensed this incipient doubt lodged in my mind, my prospective employer delivered himself of some reassurance in the disarming way in which he spoke of his work, seeming to ally us against the predatorily curious world which inevitably imposes upon scholars and savants, and casts over all their work and thought the insidious rust of doubt and disparagement. It was because of this, he said, that he preferred to work with someone like myself, who came to him free of any prejudice and would shortly be protected against prejudice.

"Many of us search in strange places for strange things," he said, "and there are aspects of existence about which even the great of our time have not yet dared to speculate. Einstein and

Schrödinger have come close among the scientists; the late writer, Lovecraft, came even closer." He shrugged. "But now, to business."

Forthwith he made me an offer of remuneration so tempting that it would have been folly even to hesitate about its acceptance; and I did not. At once upon my acceptance, he gravely cautioned me to speak to no one of anything that might actually happen or seem to happen in this house—"For things are not always as they seem," he explained enigmatically—and to know no fear within myself, even if no explanation of events was immediately forthcoming. He would expect me to occupy a room in the house; moreover, he would greatly like to have me begin work at once, as soon as my bag had been got from its place of storage—and this would be sent for—because he wished as much as possible of the conversation with his expected visitor transcribed. The transcription must be made from the adjoining room, or from another place of concealment, since it was doubtful if his visitor would speak if he suspected the presence of anyone other than his host, who had had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to come up from the port of Innsmouth and pay him this visit.

Giving me no opportunity to ask questions, but placing at my disposal pencils and paper, and showing me where I must conceal myself—behind an ingeniously contrived peephole at one of the book-cases—the professor took me upstairs to a small, cramped gable room which was to be mine for the duration of my association with him. It was flattering, I vaguely felt, to have been graduated from a mere secretary-companion, to an associate, but I had little time in which to ponder this, for I had hardly returned to the floor below when the professor observed that his visitor must be near. Hardly had he spoken, when the heavy door resounded to the thud of the knocker and the professor, motioning me to my

place of concealment, went to open it and admit his nocturnal visitor.

When my employer first mentioned his coming visitor, I had naturally assumed that it would be someone engaged in similar research; therefore I was utterly unprepared for the sight of the professor's guest that I had from my peephole; for he was by no means the kind of individual I would have expected to see in Dr. Shrewsbury's house. He was still a man on the sunny side of middle age, but this fact was not immediately apparent, for he was swarthy of skin, so swarthy, indeed, that I took him for a lascar, and it was not until he began to speak that I identified him as of South American origin. He was clearly a sailor, for his garb was nautical, and it was obvious that this was not his first visit with the professor, though equally clear that it was his first call at the house on Curwen street.

There was a colloquy in tones too low for my hearing, but this was evidently not meant for me, since it was not until the two of them were seated in the professor's study that Dr. Shrewsbury raised his voice to normal volume, and his visitor did likewise. The conversation I then transcribed was as follows:

"I wish you would tell me from the beginning, Señor Fernandez, what took place last summer."

(Apparently disregarding this suggestion, the sailor broke into his narrative in a curious but not illiterate mixture of Spanish and English at a point where he must have dropped it earlier.) "It was night, very black. I was separated from the party, and all the time I walk, walk, I do not know where . . ."

"You were somewhere in the vicinity of Machu Picchu, according to your map?"

"Si. But I do not know where, and afterward you know, we could not find the place or even the way I took. But then, it rained. There I was walking in the rain, and then I thought I heard music.

It was strange music. It was like Indian music. You know, the old Incas lived there, and they had . . ."

"Yes, yes. I know those things. I know about the Incas. I want to know what you saw, Señor Fernandez."

"I walk all the time, I don't know in what directions or anything, but it seemed to me the music was getting louder, and then one time I thought it was just in front of me, but when I walk that way, I come to a bluff. I could feel it was solid stone. I walk around a little way, feeling along it. Then the lightning flashed, and I saw it was a high hill. Then it happened. I don't know how to say it. Suddenly the hill did not seem to be there, or perhaps I was somewhere else, but I swear I had drunk nothing, I was not delirious, I was not ill. I fell down something, and I was in a doorway—it was rocks that had the shape of a doorway, and there was black water down there, and Indians half-dressed, you know the way they used to dress in the old days of the Conquistadores, and there was something in that lake. That was where this music was coming from."

"The lake?"

"Si, Señor. From inside the water and from the outside too. There was music of two kinds. One kind was like opium, it was so sweet and intoxicating; the other was by the Indians—it was wild, pipe-music, it was not good to hear."

"Can you describe what you saw in the lake?"

"It was big." (Here he paused, his brow furrowed.) "It was so big I do not know how to say it. It seemed to be as big as a hill, but of course, that cannot be. It was like jelly. All the time it changed its shape. Sometimes it was tall. Sometimes it was squat and fat with tentacles. It made a kind of whistling or gurgling sound. I do not know what the Indians were doing with it."

"Were they worshipping it?"

"Si, si. That could be it." (He seemed excited.) "But I do know what it was."

"Have you ever gone back there?"

"No. I thought I was followed that time. Sometimes I think so

still. We looked next day. Somehow I found my way back to the camp in the night, but we could find nothing."

"When you say you thought you were followed, do you know by what?"

"It was by one of the Indians." (He shook his head thoughtfully.) "It was like a shadow. I don't know. Maybe not."

"When you saw those Indians, did you hear anything?"

"Si, but I could not understand. It was not in any language I knew, only in part their own language. But there was one word, perhaps a name. . . ."

"Yes? Go on, please."

"Shooloo."

"Cthulhu!"

"Si, si." (He nodded vigorously.) "But for the rest—it was just shouting and screaming, I do not know what it was they said."

"And the thing you saw in the lake—do you know the amorphous horror god of the ocean depths, Kon, Lord of the Earthquake, of the pre-Inca people?"

"Si."

"Was the thing in the lake in the semblance of Kon?"

"I do not think so. But Kon had many faces, and what I saw came out of the water."

"Was it like the Devourer, the war-god of the Quichua? I take it you have seen the Chavin Stone?"

"Our party examined it many times before we went into the Inca country. It is in the National Museum at Lima. We went from there to Abancay and into the Andes for Cuzco, then into the Cordillera de Vilcanota to Ollantaytambo. Then to Machu Picchu."

"If you examined it, you must have noticed that the diorite slab depicts serpents issuing from various parts of the Devourer's body. Now in regard to the jelly-like mass you saw in the subterranean lake, did it not also have appendages on its body?"

"Not serpents, Señor. It is only seldom that Viracocha is so shown. But, like the thing in the lake, he represents the sea also, as

did Kon. Many people say that Viracocha means 'White Foam of the Waters'."

"But it had appendages? That's the point I wish to make."

"Si!"

"Were you in the vicinity of the fortress of Salapunco when this happened to you?"

"We had gone beyond it. You know how the land is there. The fortress is on the right bank of the river. It is very large, but it is differently constructed from most, since it is built of large trapezoid granite blocks of graded size and a shape that is uniform, all evenly placed and fitted, without use of mortar. The rampart is almost fifteen feet high, and faces the river. It is below this place, in the terrible and deep gorges of the granite mountains, where lived the Quichua-Ayars who built the strange, deserted city of Machu Picchu, which stands on the summit of a rocky promontory in a loop of the river. Almost on all sides of it is the deep canyon. We were then approaching this place when we made the camp that night. Two of us did not want to go, one wished to go to Sacsahuaman instead. But most of us had set out for Machu Picchu."

"About how far in miles were you from Salapunco?"

"Perhaps a mile, two miles. We were in the low country, and the place was very rocky, though trees and bushes grew thick there."

At this point in the conversation, an extremely curious incident took place which terminated it. Dr. Shrewsbury, his lips half-opened to ask a further question, was suddenly made aware of something beyond my own consciousness; his head gave an imperceptible jerk, as if he had heard something; his lips firmed shut; he got up and said with pressing urgency to his guest that he must leave with the utmost secrecy, and he must take elaborate care not to be seen on his return to Innsmouth; and, so saying, he conducted him posthaste to the rear entrance. Hardly had the door closed behind the sailor, before Dr. Shrewsbury was back.

"Mr. Phelan, in a few moments a gentleman will call and ask for Fernandez. When the knocker sounds, answer the knock; tell him you have not seen Fernandez, you do not know who he is, you know no one of that name."

I had no time to take issue with such orders; in any case, it was not my place to do so; I yielded to Dr. Shrewsbury's outstretched hand and placed my transcription in it even as the knocker's sound echoed through the house. My employer nodded curtly; I went to the door and opened it.

Never have I felt such extreme and immediate revulsion as I did at sight of the man on the stoop. There was, admittedly, no streetlight for some distance, and the light which flowed from the hall was so dim as to be more confusing than helpful, but I am prepared to swear that not only was there a grotesquely batrachian aspect about the fellow's face—irrationally and yet perhaps not inappropriately, there flashed into mind at once the oddly fascinating depiction by Tenniel of the frog footman of the Duchess in *Alice in Wonderland*—but that his fingers, where one hand rested upon the iron rail of the stoop, were *webbed*. Moreover, he exuded an almost overpowering odor of the sea—not that smell so commonly associated with coastal areas, but of watery depths. One might have thought that from his oddly wide mouth there would issue sounds as repulsive as his aspect, but on the contrary, he spoke in flawless English, and inquired with almost exaggerated politeness whether a friend of his, one Señor Timoto Fernandez, had called here.

"I have no acquaintance with Señor Fernandez," I answered.

He stood there for a moment, giving me a contemplative stare which, had I been prey to imaginative fear, would most certainly have chilled me; then he nodded, thanked me, bade me good night, and turned to walk away into the foggy darkness.

I returned to the professor's study. Without looking up from

the transcription he held in his hands, Dr. Shrewsbury asked me to describe our inquiring caller. I did so, omitting no detail of his attire as I had seen it in the uncertain light, and not forgetting to mention also my curious revulsion at sight of him.

He nodded, smiling grimly. "They are everywhere, those creatures," he said cryptically. But he offered no explanation of this singular incident. Instead, he went on to suggest a reason for his interest in the account of the sailor Fernandez.

No doubt it occasioned some question in my mind, he said, in regard to his patient delving, but it had long ago seemed apparent that there might well be a connection between certain forms of worship in the great plateaus of unknown central Asia, notably that of Leng, a hidden and secret place, and that of older and more primitive cultures on other continents—some of which doubtless survived in various forms to this day.

"Kimmich, for instance, asks where the Chimu civilization of Khmer came from if not remote places within what is now China? And the Dravidians who were driven out of parts of India by Aryans and went to Malaysia and Polynesia, later to mix with these same whites, and move eastward as far as Easter Island and Peru, must have brought with them certain strange rites and worship patterns. In short, it has come to me increasingly that there is a fundamental relationship among many ancient cultures and religious beliefs of which we have only a fragmentary knowledge; at the moment, my concern is the possible dual role of the war-god of the Quichua-Ayars, the Devourer, and the survival of a monstrous, pre-human time, the water-being, Cthulhu, worship of whom seems to have forbidding roots even into the present, so strongly embedded, indeed, among certain sects little known to man, that there is a profoundly intense and consciously malignant determination to keep from the rest of the world any knowledge which might lead to exposure before the time which these devo-

tees of strange cults consider propitious for the coming again of Cthulhu."

He talked in this vein for some time, and most of what he said was beyond me, as perhaps he suspected it might be, though he did not elaborate. However, it was patent to me that his concern for the sailor Fernandez was occasioned by his knowledge of the habits of the cultists, of whom presumably—though Dr. Shrewsbury did not say so—our second caller had been one. Nevertheless, for all his vagueness and the generalities of his monologue, I could not help being conscious of a concept that embodied not only a paralyzing vastness, since the worship of pre-human eras was involved, but also a numbing fright in the incredible horrors and daemonic myth-patterns it suggested. That the professor feared for the life of the sailor Fernandez seemed obvious, though he never said as much directly; yet he told of the London scholar, Follexon, who was drowned inexplicably in the Thames off Limehouse, shortly after he had announced himself as on the trail of important disclosures relative to certain ancient survivals in the East Indies; of the presumably accidental death of the archaeologist, Sir Cheever Vordennes, after the discovery of certain black monoliths in Western Australia; of the curious illness which removed from the terrestrial scene—after the publication of tales purporting to be fiction, and revealing progressively more and more about the Cthulhu-Nyarlathep-Great Old Ones cults, particularly the hellishly revelatory novel, *At the Mountains of Madness*, hinting at strange terrible survivals in the arctic wastes—that great modern master of the macabre, H. P. Lovecraft.

But there was one aspect of that singular evening about which Dr. Shrewsbury said nothing, ignoring it as if it did not exist; nor did I myself think of it until after I had made three copies of the transcribed conversation at the professor's direction, and had retired to my room, when it came to me while I lay turning over in

my mind the strange events into which I had so blindly plunged. I had had evidence of a certain power possessed by my employer almost at once and had not recognized it; before I had knocked, he had opened the door to me. And again, he had somehow seemed to sense the approach of Fernandez. But even more startling was his curious, inexplicable divination of the approach of the caller who came to inquire about the sailor. How had he become aware of him? Perhaps he had developed a supersensory ability which enabled him to hear sounds such as footsteps beyond the ken of the average mortal. But even so, even if he had heard the footsteps of the oncoming pursuer, *how could he have known his purpose?*

Deeply perplexed, I pondered this puzzle late into the night, only to fall asleep at last with no intimation of its solution, and hazily aware of the incredibly ancient atmosphere of the house in which I had now taken up my abode, an atmosphere that burgeoned with mystery and age, and inescapably, an aura of dread.

2.

Undoubtedly the first of those strange dreams in the house on Curwen Street was the result of what my employer found in the papers he sent me out to get late in the following day, after I had spent hours with him assimilating material he had previously gathered from all corners of the earth. He had told me that he very seldom left the house; that indeed most of the residents of Arkham were not even aware of his existence, and he said that I would frequently be required to run such little errands for him. Ordinarily he took no paper, save *The New York Times*; the mere affairs of the mundane world, even the shaping of events toward

another catastrophical war in Europe, were of no moment to him; but on this day he sought a particular piece of information which he was certain might be found in the pages of the *Innsmouth Courier* or the *Newburyport Correspondent*, if not in the local papers.

But it was from the *Innsmouth* paper that he finally clipped a brief, pointed little article and handed it to me with instructions to file it together with my transcription of the previous night's conversation. The article, which was suggestive and frightening in the light of what the professor had hinted in his final monologue the night before, read:

The body of a sailor who fell to his death from the docks ruined by Federal agents in the winter of 1928 was recovered this noon in the vicinity of Devil Reef. A native reported the accident early this morning, saying that the sailor seemed to be walking in the company of or just ahead of a companion, who had disappeared, however, when the local residents reached the spot. Stories of a struggle in the water and certain references to webbed hands are generally considered the product of a bottle. The sailor was identified as one Timoto Fernandez, late of the *Chan-Chan*, out of Trujillo.

The implications of this casual article were ominous; yet there was no word from the professor. Clearly he had expected something of the kind; his interest in it did not smack of regret, but only of a kind of casual, philosophic acceptance; he added no comment whatever to it, and his entire attitude forbade any inquiry from me. Yet it had an ultimate effect on him, for after an hour's study of the conversation transcript, he found among his papers a detailed map of Peru, and before this he sat for another hour, carefully scrutinizing the Andean country in the region of the ruins of Machu Picchu, Cuzco, the Salapunco fortress, and the Cor-

dillera de Vilcanota, finally marking off a small area between the fortress and the site of Machu Picchu.

Doubtless it was my observation of this singularly intent and soundless study which was in part responsible for the extraordinary dream of that night—the first of that astonishing sequence—for immediately following his examination of the map, my employer betrayed an odd eccentricity and decreed that we should both retire, though the night was still very young; indeed, dusk had hardly given way to darkness, and from outside still came the muted crying of birds subsiding for the night. Moreover, before I slept, I must partake of a venerable old mead which he himself had brewed, a wonderfully golden liquid, which he kept in a carafe in his desk and served in tiny Belgian liqueur glasses in such small amounts that it seemed futile even to raise it to one's lips—and yet its bouquet and its taste were such as to amply repay any effort made to obtain it, for it outdid even the oldest Chianti and the best Chateau Yquem to such an extent that to mention them in the same breath was to do injustice to the professor's brew. Fiery though it was, it had the additional effect of making me drowsy, with the result that I no longer felt any reluctance to retire to my room and accordingly bade the professor good night and went up the stairs.

I must have thrown myself upon my bed fully dressed for that is how I awakened in the morning. However, between darkness and daylight, the extraordinary vividness of the dream that took possession of me was so compelling that when, much later, I feared for my sanity and consulted a psychiatrist in regard to the succession of dreams which this inaugurated, I was able to relate it in the minutest detail, even if it had not been for those shocking and hideously suggestive discoveries I made later.

The data taken down and summarized by Dr. Asenath DeVoto tells as succinctly as possible the essential substance of the dream,

and I cannot do better than to copy it into my narrative just as he took it down.

"Case History.

"Andrew Phelan, ae. 28, of white parents, born in Roxbury, Mass.

"Dream I.

"Professor Shrewsbury came to my room, carrying my transcription pad and several pencils. He woke me, gave me what he carried, and said, 'Come.' Then he stepped to the leaded window opening from my room to the south, opened it, and looked out. The night was very black. He turned to me and said, 'Just wait a minute,' as if we were going somewhere. Then he took from his pocket a curiously shaped whistle, which he blew upon. After he had made its strange ululant sound, he shouted into space. He said, '*Ia! Ia! Hastur! Hastur of'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!*'"

"Then he took me by the hand and stepped up to the sill of the tall narrow window. I followed him, and both of us stepped out into space. I felt something beneath us, and I saw that each of us was riding a monstrous black-winged bat-like creature which traveled with the speed of light. In a very little while we were set down in a country of great mountains. I thought at first it was uninhabited country, but presently it was clear to me that we were in a remote, almost inaccessible region which had been the seat of an ancient civilization, for we were in the vicinity of a building of great granite blocks, trapezoid in shape, with monolithic columns. This rose behind a high rampart, more than twice as tall as we were. But it was not here we were apparently destined to go, for Dr. Shrewsbury turned and led the way down an old road, past many long abandoned structures which appeared to be portions of prelegendary megalithic buildings, deeper and deeper into the gorges and passes of the valleys lying among the mountains, ultimately leaving the road, and exploring clefts and passages in the rocky cliffs and promontories that jutted forth.

"We seemed to progress with great speed, and it did not seem that either time or space could hinder us. Indeed, there was no time. I was not aware of time passing or of any other physical need. Though it was night, and the stars were in their places: the Southern Cross, great Canopus, and others I recognized; Dr. Shrewsbury seemed to know where he was going, for presently he arrived at the place he sought, and I saw him press his hands and fingers upon a great stone wall, walking along in a place only a little above a torrential river which flowed past beneath, in the depths of the gorge.

"Suddenly a portion of the stone wall tipped open, and we entered. The place into which we walked was a short, narrow passageway, sloping sharply down. Dr. Shrewsbury led the way and I followed; we seemed to float along. The corridor presently opened upon a vast, subterranean cavern, filled with a kind of green light, subaqueous and unnatural, which seemed to emanate from a body of water not far away. It was the place described by the sailor Fernandez. Dr. Shrewsbury went directly to the water's edge, touched it with a finger, and tasted it, seeing which, I was impelled to do likewise, despite the greenish-black muck of the earth at the water's edge—though there was little soil there, only a thin siltish covering over rock. The water was salty.

"'As I thought,' said Dr. Shrewsbury. 'The lake has subterranean canals leading to the Pacific, and such passages would be certain to give into the Humboldt Currents.' He ordered me to transcribe this fact, and I did so, adding at his direction a detailed description of the cavern, or as much of it as I could see in the pallid light. 'This is the second occurrence of the Humboldt Currents in such a connection, and it is therefore not too much to suppose that at some point in their course the Currents touch upon sunken R'lyeh,' he went on, talking to himself, yet indicating that I was to put down everything he conjectured.

"While I was thus engaged, a native of Indian stock appeared. Seeing him emerge from the farther wall, Dr. Shrewsbury immedi-

ately advanced upon him and spoke to him in Spanish, to which the Indian shook his head, and threatened my employer with a small club he carried. But the professor took from another pocket a strange, five-pointed star-shaped stone, and held this up before the Indian. This conveyed something to him which made him less suspicious of us, and more amenable. The professor then spoke in another language which I could not understand, and finally in a third, which had a horrible sound akin to the sounds the professor had made before stepping out into space from the windowsill. As he spoke this language, which the Indian understood and evidently respected, my employer translated, and I took down questions and answers in our own language.

" 'Where is the door to Cthulhu?'

"The Indian pointed at the lake. 'There is the door, but it is not the time.'

" 'This is but one of many doors,' the professor went on. 'Do you know another?'

" 'No. This is the one. This is his portal.'

" 'How many are there of us in this place?'

"By thus misrepresenting ourselves as fellow-cultists, the professor induced the Indian to reveal that there were less than two hundred of the worshippers of Cthulhu in the Cordillera de Vilcanota.

"At this moment a faint disturbance in the water of the subterranean lake became noticeable, and instantly the professor's demeanor underwent a significant change. He stood for a moment watching the trembling and shuddering of the water and waited until it began to boil up and churn before he turned once more to the Indian and asked rapidly when the time of the next meeting would be.

" 'Tomorrow night. You are a day too soon.'

"Then Dr. Shrewsbury led the way out of the cavern, turning at the threshold to look back. I did likewise. I saw a horrible thing. I cannot describe it. It was a vast protoplasmic mass, which under-

went many mutations while it rose out of the water in all its monstrous horror. From it seemed to come a combination of strange unearthly music and a shrill urgent whistling. Then the professor tugged at my sleeve and we went outside of the cavern, where at once Dr. Shrewsbury summoned the strange bat-like creatures which had brought us, and we returned as we had come to the house on Curwen Street."

Manifestly it was not strange that I should have dreamed of the oddly suggestive narrative of the sailor, Fernandez; but there were certain disquieting features of that dream which upset me, and there was an astonishingly realistic and curiously detailed background for that dream. It would be untrue if I said that it did not trouble me; moreover, there were certain puzzling conditions under which it had taken place. For one thing, the intoxicating and soporific effect of Dr. Shrewsbury's mead, causing me to go to sleep immediately; for another, the absolute lack of memory of whether or not I had removed my shoes before throwing myself on the bed—for in the morning, when I woke to bright sunlight streaming into the room, my shoes were gone, and I was forced to wear my bedroom slippers. The professor explained that he had sent my shoes out to be cleaned, and, while I laid this to his eccentricity, yet it seemed exceedingly strange to me that he should have taken the trouble to remove them while I slept.

For the first half of that day he discoursed upon the languages of those obscure evil cults, the pre-human languages of Naacal, Aklo, and Tsatho-yo, and from the dread *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred, Dr. Shrewsbury quoted the translation of a couplet which, in the light of subsequent events, assumed a terrible significance.

That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange eons even death may die.

But it was in the R'lyehian language that he was most interested. There were certain hints in the less obscure passages of the *Necronomicon* as well as in the shuddersome *R'lyeh Text* which seemed to indicate that the awaited time for the resurgence of Cthulhu was growing near; and there were, moreover, certain disturbing anagrammatic cross-references in the later oblique Latin prophecies of Nostradamus which told of catastrophic events to come; and there was the additional incidence of evidence in notes the professor had earlier taken and which I had to transcribe, which indicated that there had been within the past decade a startling and ominous revival of ancient cults all over the world.

More than ever I was aware of the undeniable fact that however frank and engaging my employer seemed to be in his discussion of his interests, he took great pains, even without seeming to do so, to prevent me from learning too much. In short, no matter what he said, he spoke either in terms so vague as to be virtually meaningless without the proper information on background, or with such lofty and erudite references that it was frankly impossible to patch together anything even remotely resembling a coherent narrative. At the end of that day I knew no more than I had known after my first conversation with the professor—that he was on the track of certain blasphemous cults of ancient, pre-human eras, whose survival to the present day in out-of-the-way places seemed to fascinate him; the references he made to colossal beings, the Great Old Ones, quotations from such books as the Comte d'Erlette's *Cultes des Ghoules*, the *Pnakotic Manuscript*, the *Libor Ivonie*, and the *Unaussprechlichen Kulden* of Von Junzt, oblique mention of such beings as Nyarlathotep, Hastur, Lloigor, Cthugha, Azathoth, which, in addition to Cthulhu, had their own bodies of worshippers—all these were impossible of any coherence. Nor was it possible for me to make anything out of the quotations from the ancient books which the professor put me to

transcribing in triplicate, though they were filled with the most outré and terrifying implications, and some among them were fixed in my memory even as I became aware of what it was I put down:

Ubbo-Sathla is the source, the unbegotten beginning from whom came those who dared set themselves against the Elder Gods who ruled from Betelgeuze, those who warred upon the Elder Gods, the Great Old Ones led by the blind idiot god, Azathoth, and Yog-Sothoth, who is All-in-One and One-In-All, and upon whom are no strictures of time or space, and whose agents are 'Umr At-Tawil and the Ancient Ones, who dream forever of that time when once again they shall rule, to whom rightfully belong Earth and the entire universe of which it is a part. . . . Great Cthulhu shall rise from R'lyeh, Hastur the Unspeakable shall return from the dark star which is in the Hyades near Aldebaran, the red eye of the bull, Nyarlathotep shall howl forever in the darkness where he abideth, Shub-Niggurath shall spawn his thousand young, and they shall spawn in turn and shall take dominion over all wood nymphs, satyrs, leprechauns, and the Little People, Lloigor, Zhar, and Ithaqua shall ride the spaces among the stars, and those who serve them, the Tcho-Tcho, shall be ennobled, Cthugha shall encompass his dominion from Fomalhaut, and Tsathoggua shall come from N'kai. . . . They wait by the gates, for the time draws near, the hour is soon at hand, and the Elder Gods sleep, dreaming, and there are those who know the spells put upon the Great Old Ones by the Elder Gods, as there are those who shall learn how to break them, as already they know how to command the servants of those who wait beyond the door from Outside.

In the course of that day, the professor descended to a laboratory on the lowest floor of the building, and busied himself with what appeared to be chemical experiments, leaving me to my own devices upstairs, though in midafternoon he came up, carrying my shoes, now cleaned and polished, and instructed me to go to the

library of Miskatonic University and transcribe page 177 of the *Necronomicon*.

I was glad to leave the house even for what promised to be so brief a task, and I took my departure at once. The indicated page was in the Latin of Olaus Wormius, and was equally as meaningless as earlier references, though, truth to tell, there were now beginning to form in my mind certain dark suspicions which I did not dare face fully, preferring rather to remain completely objective in my approach, as Dr. Shrewsbury had suggested would be the best course for me to follow. The page in question was not long, and it was apparently being copied because of some doubt held by my employer about his own previous copy, which I had had opportunity to see earlier that day.

For within the five-pointed star carved of grey stone from ancient Mnar lies armor against witches and daemons, against the Deep Ones, the Dholes, the Voormis, the Tcho-Tcho, the Abominable Mi-Go, the Shoggoths, the Valusians and all such peoples and beings who serve the Great Old Ones and their Spawn, but it is less potent against the Great Old Ones themselves. He who hath the five-pointed stone shall find himself able to command all beings who creep, swim, crawl, walk, or fly even to the source from which there is no returning.

In the land of Yhe as in great R'lyeh, in Y'ha-nthlei as in Yoth, in Yuggoth as in Zothique, in N'kai as in K'n-yan, in Kadath-in-the-Cold-Waste, as in the Lake of Hali, in Carcosa as in Ib, it shall have power; but even as the stars wane and grow cold, as the suns die, and the spaces between the stars grow more great, so wanes the power of all things—of the five-pointed star-stone as of the spells put upon the Great Old Ones by the benign Elder Gods, and there shall come a time as once there was a time, and it shall be shown that

That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange eons even death may die.

While I was engaged in copying this page, I observed that I was being kept under eye by an aged attendant, who contrived to move ever closer to me. Since the *Necronomicon* was so rare a book—but five copies were known to be in existence—I naturally assumed that the old gentleman was intent upon seeing that no harm came to it, but presently it occurred to me that his interest was rather in me than in the book, and, having finished, I leaned back and afforded him an opportunity to speak to me if he desired to do so.

He took the opportunity with alacrity, and introduced himself as an old resident of Arkham. Was I not the young man who worked for Professor Shrewsbury? I admitted that I was. His eyes shone extraordinarily, and his fingers began to tremble. Clearly, he said, I was not a native, for there were curious stories about the professor.

"Where was he those twenty years?" asked Mr. Peabody. "Did he ever say to you?"

I was mystified. "What twenty years?"

"Ah, you don't even know, eh? Well, I don't wonder he won't say anything. But he was gone, slick and clean as a whistle, just vanished into the wind, you might say, for twenty years. Three years ago he came back, didn't look a day older, and just went on as if nothing had happened. 'Traveling,' he says he was. But it looks mighty queer that a man could disappear from the middle of the street, you might say, and be gone for twenty years, never draw a penny of his money from the bank, and then come back and take up just where he left off as if nothing at all had taken place, not a day older, not a whit different—no sir, that's not natural. If he was traveling, what did he use for money? I worked in the bank that time, I know."

This came out in such a spate of words that it took me a few moments to assimilate it. It was not strange that Professor Shrews-

bury should be the object of almost superstitious suspicion among the natives; ancient Arkham with its gambrel roofs and forbidding dormers, with its legends of witches and exorcised devils, was indeed a likely and fertile ground for the growth of doubt and distrust, particularly when such reactions concerned someone who was so manifestly versed in fabled lore as Dr. Shrewsbury.

"He has never mentioned it to me," I said with as much dignity as I could muster.

"No, and he won't. And don't you mention this to him, either. It might be as much as my job's worth, though I don't know that he ever did anything to anybody—just always living so much alone and keeping to himself, like he does."

I did not think it fitting to discuss my employer in this fashion; so politely but firmly I pointed out that there were doubtless entirely logical explanations for what had taken place, ignored his quick retort: "They've all been gone into and not a one fits!" and took my departure. However, I did not immediately leave the building. Impelled by curiosity stimulated by Mr. Peabody's inquiry, I sought the newspaper files of both the Arkham papers, the *Gazette* and the *Advertiser*.

I had no difficulty confirming Mr. Peabody's curious story; Professor Shrewsbury had literally disappeared from a country lane west of Arkham, where he had been seen walking but a few moments before one evening in September, twenty-three years ago. No clue had ever been discovered, not in the lane or in his house; his house had been shut up, pending the appearance of a claimant, and, since none had ever come forward, and the property taxes had been duly paid by Dr. Shrewsbury's legal advisers, it had remained in this state until suddenly one day three years ago, Dr. Shrewsbury walked out of it, looking fit as a fiddle, as close-mouthed as a clam about his whereabouts, and resumed his regular way of life, save only that his researches now took a somewhat

different line, and his daily existence followed a slightly different pattern. The newspapers had treated the story seriously enough, but had obviously yielded to Dr. Shrewsbury's insistence to close the incident as quickly and quietly as possible, for there was a cessation of all accounts and speculations which was as sudden as the incident's beginning.

As curiously as this strange occurrence affected me, yet I could not but feel that it was my employer's privilege to maintain such silence as he thought best to keep. I could not, however, deny to myself that the discovery of this curious fact affected me strangely, perhaps not unpleasantly, and yet not entirely agreeably. It was patent that the situation in which I found myself was bewildering to the extreme. Dr. Shrewsbury apparently had more than one kind of reputation, and, though no one had ever taken occasion to say anything derogatory about him to me, I could sense an undercurrent of distrust and suspicion of him.

When I reached the house on Curwen Street I found the professor once again in his study, carefully handling a package which he was arranging on his desk at the moment of my entrance. As I came into the room he extended a careless hand for the transcript, and almost at the same instant gave me a list of materials he needed, instructing me to obtain them on the next occasion I had to go into the shopping district of Arkham. I glanced at the list of materials, and was astonished to discover that all were well-known chemical ingredients for the making of nitro-glycerine; this, together with the care with which my employer handled the package on his desk, seemed to indicate an even greater scope of interests than I had at first given the professor credit for.

"Yes, this is what I wanted. I did have it right," mused the professor, reading my transcript carefully, and repeating some parts of it aloud, though the effect of his doing so with the black glasses masking his eyes was oddly unnerving. But in a moment he put it

down. "Now, then, I'll go to bed early tonight; if you like, you can work here—you have enough to do; or you may go to bed, too. Or, if you should want to go out . . ."

"No, I've no wish to go out."

"In no circumstances am I to be disturbed until morning."

It was late twilight when we sat down to a frugal meal, and immediately thereafter the professor repaired to his room, taking with him not only the package from his desk, but also the decanter of his golden mead and a glass. I thought it oddly discourteous of him not to offer me another taste of this agreeable liquor, but forebore to say so. But I had little time in which to think of this; for work beckoned me to the study, and there I spent the first half of the night.

It must have been close to midnight when I was aware of the rising storm outside, and heard the banging of a shutter. I had noticed a cumulus cloud bank louring on the horizon when I returned from the library of Miskatonic University; doubtless it was these clouds which had moved across the face of heaven and were now responsible for both wind and rain. The banging shutter, however, beat insistently on my consciousness, and finally I got up to investigate it. It was in any case time for me to retire.

I made the rounds of the ground floor, but there both windows and shutters were shut or fixed firmly down; it must then be on the second floor, and accordingly I went up the stairs, first to my own room, and then to the others, only to reach the conclusion that the shutter was banging at one of the windows in Professor Shrewsbury's bedroom. I hesitated to go in and fix it, but reflected that my doing so would in all probability prevent its waking him; so I turned the knob of his door silently and entered his room, leaving the door slightly ajar, for I did not want to turn on a light. I found my way to the window, which was standing open, so that the wind could blow the rain into the room; I leaned out, ad-

justed the shutter, and drew back in, lowering the window somewhat, but not entirely closing it. As I turned, my eyes fell across the bed, and I saw that my employer was not in it; I crossed the room and opened the door wider, mystified; the light from the hall streamed in to reveal that he had apparently only lain down on the bed; he had not undressed. For some reason unknown to me he had gone out, but I had no sooner come to this conclusion before I was uncomfortably aware that I had heard no sound where I worked in the library, and it seemed a manifest impossibility that the old man should have been able to leave the house without somehow attracting my attention.

While I was pondering this, I saw the decanter of mead and the glass Dr. Shrewsbury had taken with him to his room. I crossed over to it and, examining the glass, saw that my employer had drunk of it. Indeed, there was still a drop or so in the slim glass, and impulsively I lifted it to my lips and allowed the fiery liquid to roll over my tongue and down my throat. Then I left the room, resolutely determined to make no inquiry as to Dr. Shrewsbury's whereabouts, since I had no right to pry into matters that did not concern me.

But my curiosity in regard to my employer's strange absence soon gave way before another even stranger occurrence. I have hinted previously that there was about the old house on Curwen Street an aura almost as of dread; I had hardly got into bed, before I was acutely aware of this, even to the extent of imagining inimical hosts pressing upon the building from all sides, but particularly from that side of the house which faced the fog-bound Miskatonic River; moreover, I was only briefly conscious of this peculiar phenomenon, before I was even more sharply aware of something more, something even stranger. This was nothing less than an auditory illusion in that I heard or seemed to hear strange

sounds which could not possibly have had an origin anywhere but within my subconscious; for there was no other rational explanation of the noises I now heard on the borderland of sleep. They began with the sound of footsteps—not steps along the walk outside of the house, nor along the floor or even the ground beneath my window, but steps that scraped and stumbled along what must certainly have been a rocky or stony path, for there were occasionally also the additional small noises of stones or rock fragments rolling and falling, and once or twice the distinct impression as of something striking water. How long these sounds lasted, I have no way of knowing; indeed, I grew so accustomed to them, despite their strangeness, that I lay in a condition of semi-sleep until I was brought bolt upright in bed by a thunderous detonation, followed by other explosive sounds, and the terrible urgency of crashing rocks and shale, succeeded by a bitter cry, "Too little! Too little!"

Now there was no possibility of hallucination save that arising from delirium; I was reasonably certain that I was not delirious; in fact, I got out of bed, went to the bathroom and got myself a glass of water. I returned to my bed once more, composed myself again for sleep, and distinctly heard a whistled ululation followed by a chanting voice saying those same mystic words of my first strange dream in the house: "*Ia! Ia! Hastur cv'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!*" Then there was a great rushing sound, as of colossal wings, and then silence, complete and absolute, and no further sound impinging upon my consciousness save the normal sounds of the night in Arkham.

To say that I was disturbed is to diminish my reaction to insignificance. I was profoundly troubled, but even in my unnatural drowsiness, I could not help reflecting that on the first occasion of drinking Dr. Shrewsbury's mead, I had had so strange and vivid a

dream; and now, with just a drop or two of it, I had somehow had my sensory perception heightened beyond every natural plane! This "explanation" occurred to me at first with the utmost conviction, but as I contemplated it, I found myself forced to reject it as scientifically unsound. How close I came at that moment to the incredible truth I did not learn for some weeks, for at the time, I was aware only of the one property I knew the mead to possess—that of making me extremely sleepy, and I drowsed off.

In the morning I debated telling the professor of my experience, but ultimately I resolved to say nothing; his insistence on my lack of imagination at our first interview led me to believe that he might go so far as to terminate my employment if he heard such an account from my lips; for the same reason I had told him nothing of my odd dream. Nor did the professor offer any explanation of his unaccountable absence of the previous night. I had been briefly apprehensive lest he still be absent—I knew that the questions he had originally asked me about my ability to defend myself in a physical sense pertained to a possibility that I might have to act as his bodyguard whenever he went out—but he had now returned; he was deep in his studies when I entered the library to find him sitting before a large-scale map pinned up across the book-shelves, a map of all the earth upon which he had placed little red-headed pins here and there. Indeed, at the moment he had just identified a place in South America, when he turned to greet me quite cheerfully despite a rather haggard look.

After breakfast we plunged immediately into the correlation of earlier notes and references made by the professor, as usual, about ancient cults, curious present-day survivals of strange worship, and the like, and I observed that same care and reticence about my employer which I had so readily noticed from the beginning. Our work was leisurely, if obscure to me; there was no sense of pressure at any time, and I found myself growing very interested in the strange beings which, according to my employer, had been

worshipped terrestrially and interplanetarily by pre-human races of creatures. As day followed day, these shadowy great beings and their followers began to take on a subconscious existence just across the borderland from reality, a tenuous, fantastic shaping up in my imagination, though not without certain dark hints of terror and awful dread which came upon me from time to time.

On the third day of this work, the professor provided a startling little epilogue to the curious incident of the sailor Fernandez and his story. He was at the moment reading in the *New York Times*, when I saw a smile briefly touch his lips; he reached for a scissors and clipped an item which he handed to me, saying that I might add it to the file on Fernandez and mark the file *Closed*.

The item was of wire service origin, date-lined from Lima, Peru, and read:

A localized earth shock in the Cordillera de Vilcanota last night completely destroyed a rocky hill along the river between the deserted Inca city of Machu Picchu and the fortress of Salapunco. Señorita Ysola Montez, instructor at the Indian school which is kept in one room of the abandoned fortress, reported that the shock came with the force of an explosion, threw her out of bed, and aroused the Indians for many miles around. Despite the evidence of the shattered hill, which apparently collapsed into an underground river or reservoir doubtless stemming from the gorge, seismographs at Lima recorded no disturbance of the earth in the vicinity. Scientists are inclined to regard the incident as evidence only of a local collapse brought about by a weakening of the cavernous understructure of the hill below Salapunco. A number of Indians of the vicinity, whose presence at the scene has been unaccounted for, were killed.

3.

It was again a newspaper account which was responsible for the second, and also subsequently, for the last of those strange dreams

I had in the house on Curwen Street. So long a time had passed since the previous dream—almost two months, for it was now mid-August—that I had come to look back upon that initial sleep-bound adventure as a remarkable effect of the house itself, the possible result of a change in my way of existence when I removed from Boston. Moreover, within the fortnight immediately past, Dr. Shrewsbury had begun the dictation of his second book, designed to follow *An Investigation Into the Myth-Patterns of Latterday Primitives With Especial Reference to the R'lyeh Text*; he had entitled this second book, *Cthulhu in the Necronomicon*, and for the most part it was utterly incomprehensible to me, being a book written for savants by a savant, but from time to time there occurred strangely stirring passages, which now and then seemed to touch upon my own boundaries of recent experience in a disturbing fashion. He was dictating such paragraphs on the morning of the day which was to end with the second of those remarkable dreams.

"It never seems to occur to the man of even superior intelligence that these incredible myth-patterns have their survival in the present day, and yet it should not seem at all impossible, for it is manifest that their beliefs are centered upon beings which are for the most part co-existent with all time and conterminous with space. Moreover, their extra-dimensional properties allow for much greater latitude than the dimensional laws of our own sciences. By denying this, by implication they deny also that it might be possible to systematically hunt down and close the openings from that borderland; for it has been shown in repeated instances that the Great Old Ones cannot come forth unless they are summoned by those minions who are ever ready to serve them here and on other stars and planets. I refer the skeptical to the occurrence at Devil Reef off Innsmouth and direct their attention to those curiously batrachian survivals one may yet find in isolated

places in the vicinity of both Innsmouth and Newburyport, as well as to the thinly disguised fiction of it by the late H. P. Lovecraft. I commend him likewise to the study of certain parallelisms—a comparison between Ithaqua, the Wind-Walker of the ancient myth-patterns, and the Wendigo of the northwoods Indians; between the Devourer, the War-God of the Quechua-Ayars, and Cthulhu of the mythos—to mention but two which occur to me and to which I have given some little thought. The similarities are almost instantly apparent.

"By this persistent denial of certain evidential aspects which are beyond scientific explanation as we now define science, the doubters make it impossible or well-nigh impossible to utilize the known enmities among the lesser beings of evil who would ultimately once again assume sway over the destiny of the planets, and who are unified only in their incessant war upon the impregnable Elder Gods who must ultimately awake and renew the spells which bind this evil spawn and which are now weakening as the aeons pass since their initial imprisonment. They would thus thrust aside the possibility of increasing the tension between such followers of Cthulhu as those batrachian Deep Ones, who inhabit the many-columned city of Y'ha-nthlei deep in the Atlantic off the blasted port of Innsmouth, as well as sunken R'lyeh, and the bat-winged interplanetary travelers, who are half-man, half-beast, and serve Cthulhu's half-brother, Him Who Is Not To Be Named, Hastur, the Unspeakable; of setting against one another the amorphous spawn who serve the mad, faceless Nyarlathotep and the Black Goat of the Woods, Shub-Niggurath, and the Flame Creatures of Cthugha, among whom there exists eternal rivalry which might well be turned into devastating fury. Let the servants be in turn summoned to the aid of some enlightened brain, so that the openings for Cthulhu may be stopped by the aid of those air-beings serving Hastur and Lloigor; let the minions of Cthugha de-

stroy the hidden places within the earth where Nyarlathotep and Shub-Niggurath and their hideous offspring dwell. Knowledge is power. But knowledge is also madness, and it is not for the weak to take arms against these hellish beings. As Lovecraft wrote, 'Man must be prepared to accept notions of the cosmos, and of his own place in the seething vortex of time, whose merest mention is paralyzing.' "

At this point, Dr. Shrewsbury had completed the first volume of his second book—a book never destined to be finished, though I did not know it then—and he directed me thereupon to complete my transcription in triplicate, proof, and ship the remaining manuscript to the printer, together with a check to cover the cost of production; for no publisher would risk money by bringing out such a book as this, which, though it purported to be factual, had every aspect of the wildest, most incredible fiction, besides which the highly colored romances of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells paled into utter insignificance, for the professor swung boldly away from the terrestrial scene with such conviction that it was impossible to read what he had written without a kind of paralyzing apprehension, and an increased awareness of forces and powers beyond the comprehension of men.

As I turned to the transcription, my employer took up that day's paper, glancing rapidly down each column, and going from page to page. He had got perhaps to the sixth or seventh page when he gave an exclamation half of delight, half of alarm, and reached for the scissors to clip a brief article which he handed to me with instructions to begin a new file. I put it to one side, and only when I had completed my work on the first portion of *Cthulhu in the Necronomicon* did I turn to it again.

That was in late afternoon, and by that time I had observed in my employer a steadily increasing excitement, as if he were laboring under some inner pressure and could not wait for the time

appointed for its relief. The article was brief, and couched in the usual dignified language of the *Times*:

London, August 17: A mystery that might have come from the pages of one of Charles Fort's remarkable books is suggested by the case of Nayland Massie, a dock-worker who has been absent from his home for seven months. Mr. Massie turned up the other day. He was found wandering on the streets and identified by marks he carried. He could not speak a word of English, but speaks a strange, foreign tongue, which no one has as yet been able to identify. His condition is serious. The eminent specialist on unusual diseases, Sir Lenden Petra, who is an accomplished linguist, has been called into consultation. There is no clue whatever to the place where Mr. Massie might have spent the seven months of his strange absence.

It was an account, in short, of which there were many similar narratives in the files I had taken opportunity to glance over from time to time, at Dr. Shrewsbury's direction, and it seemed incredible that it could stimulate the two dreams which were to come.

For that night came the second of that unbelievable trio of dreams. And it was presaged by precisely the same events as the first—by Dr. Shrewsbury's insistence upon our early retirement in order to be ready for more intense work tomorrow, by a drink of his golden mead, and by the quick drowsiness and the dream-haunted sleep that followed. I turn again to the account given to Dr. DeVoto and transcribed by him under the heading of *Dream II*.

"Professor Shrewsbury came to my room, as before, once again carrying pad and pencils which he gave to me after he had awakened me. Everything happened as before. After he had opened the windows and shouted that strange command into space, we stepped out and found ourselves once more astride the huge bat-winged creatures of the first dream. I remember making an examination of

them, but apart from the curiously repellent feeling as of human flesh under my hands, and furred wings, I was not able to ascertain what these creatures were like, but it now seemed to me that Professor Shrewsbury *talked* to them.

"Again in a short while we were put down, but this time it was soon apparent that we were in no isolated locality, for lights glowed all around us, and off to our left there were great beacons and a floodlit field. Dr. Shrewsbury seemed to know precisely where we were and he made for the buildings beyond this floodlit field with as much haste as he could muster. We were not far away, and it was soon evident that we were following a country lane. As we drew near to the floodlit area and the buildings, I began to be aware of a vague familiarity, as if I had been in this place before, not too long ago. Presently I recognized the surroundings; we were at Croydon Aerodrome, which I had visited three years before as an undergraduate. The professor's purpose was soon clear; he had gone there only to get a taxicab, into which he bundled me and then sought a city directory inside the nearest building. When he came out he directed the driver to take us to an address in Park Lane, and to wait there for us.

"We were taken to the Park Lane address and applied for admittance, which we did not gain until my employer took out his card and wrote across it, 'In regard to the case of Nayland Massie.' After this had been taken in, we were permitted to enter, and we were conducted into the presence of an elderly and very dignified man, whom Professor Shrewsbury addressed as Dr. Petra. My employer immediately indicated his interest in the case of the dock-worker Massie, and explained that he had come by air from his home in America to determine whether he might not be able to identify and translate the language which the mysteriously absent dock-worker now spoke.

"Dr. Petra was immediately most helpful. He explained that Massie had been only an illiterate fellow, but that in this language which he now spoke, together with a mixture of occasional Greek

and Latin words, he betrayed a high degree of intelligence. In short though the physical man who had returned from whatever place he had been was the same, the mental man was obviously not similar. Moreover, his physical condition was such that he was not expected to live long, for he had apparently been exposed to rigorous climates, and conditioned to violent climactic changes, but that conditioning was rapidly wearing off and he would not be able to withstand the damage being done to his body in that change. To-day's *London Times* had a rather complete summary of the case, if Dr. Shrewsbury would care to have Dr. Petra's copy.

"My employer accepted the paper and gave it to me. I put it into my pocket. My employer then suggested that he would like to interview the patient, if possible. Sir Lenden Petra ordered his own car out and accompanied us across London to the East India Dock Road, where the dock-worker Massie was being kept, in a kind of coma, but able at times to answer certain questions put to him in Latin and Greek.

"We were admitted by his nurse, and taken at once to the bedside.

"There lay a man in his middle-forties, motionless, his eyes open and clearly antipathetic to the shaded light that glowed from a lamp nearby. At our entrance, though he did not turn his head, he began to make a low murmuring sound, whereupon my employer signalled to me to be ready to take down whatever he translated.

" 'There,' said Dr. Petra, 'that is the language. I observe that it has certain repetitive sounds and constructions suggesting that he is speaking a formal language—but no one in London seems to know what it is, save that it seems very ancient.'

" 'Yes,' replied Dr. Shrewsbury, 'it is R'lyehian!'

"Dr. Petra seemed astonished. 'You know it?'

" 'Yes, it is a pre-human language, still spoken in certain hidden places both terrestrially and extraterrestrially.'

"The sounds that now came from the dock-worker's lips were as follows: '*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah-nagl fhtagn.*'

This Dr. Shrewsbury readily translated as: 'In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming.' He then addressed a query to Mas-sie, whereupon the dock-worker turned his head and stared at us. Dr. Petra said that it was the first sign of cognizance he had made.

"The following brief conversation now ensued, Dr. Shrewsbury speaking in the same language as the dock-worker.

" 'Where were you?'

" 'With those who serve Him Who Is To Come.'

" 'Who is he?'

" 'Great Cthulhu. In his house at R'lyeh he is not dead, but only sleeping. He shall come when he is summoned.'

" 'Who will summon him?'

" 'Those who worship him.'

" 'Where is R'lyeh?'

" 'It is in the sea.'

" 'But you were not under water.'

" 'No, I was on the island.'

" 'Ah! What island?'

" 'It was thrown up by the eruption of the ocean floor.'

" 'Is it part of R'lyeh?'

" 'It is part of R'lyeh.'

" 'Where is it?'

" 'In the Pacific Ocean near the Indies.'

" 'What latitude?'

" 'I think it is S. Latitude $49^{\circ} 51'$, W. Longitude $128^{\circ} 34'$. It is off New Zealand, south of the Indies.'

" 'Did you see Him?'

" 'No. But He was there.'

" 'How were you brought there?'

" 'I was taken by something in the water of the Thames one night. They brought me.'

" 'What was it?'

" 'It was like a man, but it was not a man. It could swim in all waters. It had webbed hands, and its face was like a frog's.'

"At this juncture, Massie began to breathe deeply, in exhaustion, and Dr. Petra ended the conversation, apologetically, but Dr. Shrewsbury brushed his apologies away, saying that he had heard enough, and making the same kind of vague explanation to Dr. Petra which he was in the habit of making to me in the house on Curwen Street. My employer was obviously in great haste to get away, and as soon as possible we parted from Dr. Petra, and made our way on foot to a desolate section along the East India Docks, where, now in the darkness of night's depths, Dr. Shrewsbury paused and made his strange ululant whistling and commanded, '*Ia! Ia! Hastur! Hastur of'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugilagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!*'"

"Then immediately our bat-winged steeds came out of the heavens and we returned to the ancient gambrel roofs of witch-cursed Arkham."

More even than the dreams themselves, the hiatus between the second and the third of this unholy trio sent me in the end to Dr. Asenath DeVoto for a consultation, fearing for my sanity. For, despite the fact that I was manifestly in the house of Dr. Shrewsbury on Aylesbury Street, working with my employer at the preparation of some chemicals, at which he was feverishly engaged for what seemed many hours, the curious and grotesquely disturbing fact about the time between the second and third dreams was this: *there did not seem to be an hiatus at all!* I had lost, it seemed, the power or capacity to distinguish between dream and reality; I no longer knew which was which, for all the events of that inexplicable hiatus, however clear they seemed to me, had the same quality as the dreams.

Were we in that house on Curwen Street preparing those mysterious packages which Dr. Shrewsbury ultimately brought to his desk in the study? Or was I caught in the mesh of a dream so profound that I could not waken to reality? It troubled me then,

though it troubles me less now. But at that time, there was present in the house such an air of dire necessity, such a suggestion of terrible peril, such an urgency, that food and drink—save for that strange golden mead and its effect—seemed unnecessary, and the ordinary pursuits of the day were given over to the task before us, veiled as always in that secrecy which the professor maintained in the face of everything.

Dr. DeVoto took all these impressions down, as he did the dreams; he made no comment on them, and circumstances made it impossible for me to see him again; for events took place with terrible swiftness after the occurrence of the third dream. I cannot be sure that that third and final cataclysmic dream took place on that night or on some other night; or even that it did not take place by day, or that it was not in sequence a part of the second dream. All I know is that it began as before, with the arrival of Dr. Shrewsbury in my room, the summoning of the strange winged beasts which carried us, and its beginning differed only in that we were this time burdened with the packages Dr. Shrewsbury had prepared.

The third and last dream, as Dr. DeVoto took it down, was as follows:

"We were put down on a strange, bleak place of utterly alien aspect. The sky was dark, forbidding; it seemed to me that fogs of a strange, unearthly green color, moved eternally about us. From time to time I had chilling glimpses of strange monolithic structures in part ruins, overgrown with seaweed, now drying, hanging limply from the superstructures before us. All around us was the sound of the sea, and the earth underfoot was of a greenish-black muck; it was earth similar to that in the cavern of my first dream.

"The professor made his way cautiously forward until we came to a portal, before which lay many lesser stones, from among which

the professor picked up a curious stone in the shape of a five-pointed star and gave it to me, saying: 'The earthquake evidently broke away the encrustation of these talismans put there by the Elder Gods when Cthulhu was imprisoned. This is one of the doorways to the Outside.'

"He took one of the packages and unwrapped it, and I saw that it contained explosives of singular potency. These he directed me to place strategically around the portal. Despite my awe of my surroundings, I did so. For the surroundings, whenever the mists cleared a little, were such as to leave a man breathless with wonder. The ruins which still stood partially here and there, untouched by the quake which had caused this island to rise up from the depths, were of buildings of such vast angles and such colossal stone surfaces, and were moreover marked with such horrific hieroglyphs and impious images that I was overcome with the most intense feeling of dread. The angles and planes of this portion of the great sunken city were non-Euclidean, loathsomely suggestive of the spheres and dimensions of which Professor Shrewsbury had been writing only a little while ago, of dimensions hideously apart from our own.

"The portal at which we worked framed a great carven door, which stood partly open, but not yet so far that it could permit entry. I do not know precisely when that door began to open imperceptibly wider, but it was the professor who first noticed the *things* which were slithering over the monolithic rocks toward us from out of the sea beyond us. He had set up the apparatus necessary for the detonation which he meant to set off, and casually pointed out the scaly creatures with their webbed hands and feet, and their half-human, half-batrachian features, cautioning me not to be afraid, for the five-pointed stone he had given me would protect me from them, if not from 'Him down there.'

"At this moment he noticed that the door seemed to stand a little wider. 'Was that door so far open at first?' he asked agitatedly.

"I said I did not think so.

"Then, in Heaven's name, come away!"

"Even before I stepped back, I was conscious of two things impinging upon my senses—a charnel stench that seemed to come from the now slowly opening door, and a nasty, slopping sound, a soggy sloshing that was paralyzingly frightful. It was this latter that sent us reeling back. Dr. Shrewsbury ran for the detonator, even as the door swung wide and a thing of abysmal horror loomed there to fill it. I cannot describe it. It was similar to the thing in the subterranean lake in the Cordillera de Vilcanota in Peru, yet it was somehow more hideous, more awful, for it did not have the multiplicity of tentacles, but rather a protoplasmic formlessness which was clearly directed by an intelligence which could shape it in any way it chose. Thus, its first appearance was as of a mass of doughy flesh filling the entire doorway; then suddenly a great, malign eye appeared in its mass; and at the same time the amorphous mass began to ooze out around the doorway with an ugly, nauseatingly retching sound, accompanied by a wild fluted whistling.

"At that moment Dr. Shrewsbury pushed the detonator, and the stones around the portal burst asunder and heavenward before the terrible force of the explosive which Dr. Shrewsbury had brought. The monolithic pillars and slabs broke and collapsed upon the thing in the doorway.

"Without wasting a moment, Dr. Shrewsbury chanted his command to the winged creatures, who came out of the fog-bound heavens to aid our escape from that accursed island. But we did not get away before I saw yet one thing more, even more awful than what had gone before. For the thing which had been blown to shreds by the explosion, and crushed by the vast monolithic stones, was *reforming* like water running together, shaping itself together by means of a thousand tentacles of oozing protoplasm, pushing its way with incredible rapidity over the green-black muck of the earth toward us even as that earth began to tremble and quake, possibly as a result of the thunderous, deafening detonation which may have set off subterrene rumblings to disturb the precarious existence of this island.

"Then we mounted the bat-winged creatures and returned to the house on Curwen Street."

4.

It was after this dream that I sought the advice of Dr. Asenath DeVoto in Boston. Certain events, prosaic enough in themselves, but with such terrible implications, had taken place, that I could no longer be sure of my sanity; I had to have the assurance of a competent psychiatrist—though, ironically, the only immediate advice DeVoto could give me after hearing what I had to say, was to leave the house on Curwen Street and Arkham as soon as it was possible to do so, for it was conclusively shown, he held, that Dr. Shrewsbury and his ancient house had a deleterious effect on me. He made no attempt to explain the curious facts of which I grew cognizant after I awoke from that shuddersome third dream, beyond brushing them off as hallucinatory convictions which had been made to fit into my dreams after their actual occurrence, suggesting that in my somewhat abnormal state I had brought into being the physical facts which tended to show that *the dreams in the house on Curwen Street were not dreams at all, but horrible, grotesque fantasies in which I had somehow taken actual, physical part!*

How else could I explain what had taken place, and what was yet to take place?

For the events following that trio of dreams now occurred with such rapidity that it was nothing short of astounding that I should not before have stumbled upon the key to the mystery, incredible as it was, unready as I was to accept it or even to recognize it. Even then, perhaps, if it had not been for the agitation of Professor Shrewsbury, that profound disturbance of his equanimity which prevented him from removing my shoes, I might not have known.

For when I awoke on that morning, I discovered that my shoes were covered with greenish-black muck—the same soil as that of that hellish, accursed Pacific Isle of the last dream! Not only that, but in my pocket, just where I had put it in the dream, was that strange stone in the shape of a five-pointed star, covered with hieroglyphs utterly beyond my understanding!

There might—*there might*, I say, have been a logical explanation of these two single factors; it could have been possible for anyone, who might have had some knowledge of my dreams, to have doctored my shoes, and got ready such a stone; but no one could have “planted” the third fact, so prosaic in itself that its very mundane aspects made its appearance all the more frightful. For in the inner pocket of my coat I found a copy of the *London Times*, folded back to that very *Fortean Mystery* of the dock-worker we had visited, a copy of the paper of the day before, so recent that it could by no natural power on earth have reached the house on Curwen Street!

This discovery sent me to that unsatisfactory visit with Dr. DeVoto, and it brought me back to confront Dr. Shrewsbury. But my employer’s agitation was such that I was forestalled in what I wished to say not only by the pallor and haggardness of his features, but by the rush of words that greeted me immediately on my return from Boston.

“Where have you been, Andrew? But, no matter—hurry now; take my files down to the library of Miskatonic University. There some future student may make good use of them.”

With deep astonishment I saw that he had been going over his files in my absence, and had made selections of various folders and boxes of material which he wished to remove to a more permanent setting. But his agitation, and the strangeness of his manner gave me little time in which to contemplate his behavior, for, having thus urged me to make all possible speed to the library with

his precious documents and papers, he went about the room selecting further material to add to the growing mound in the middle of the study floor—books, the manuscript of the first part of his second book, old texts, notes he had made from the borrowed copies of the *Pnakotic Manuscript*, the *Necronomicon*, and others, particularly a sealed folio which had been labeled in his hand the *Celaeno Fragments*, and which Dr. Shrewsbury had been careful to make clear I was not to read.

All the time he alternately murmured aloud—such phrases as, “I should not have taken him! It was a mistake!” while he looked at me with a kind of weary commiseration—or, what was still more startling and frightening, he paused from time to time and listened, his eyes turned toward that side of the house which looked out across the street upon the shore of the Miskatonic River, as if he expected to hear the sound of his approaching doom. So unnerving was this, that when I left the house I cast a furtive, fearful glance toward the river shore myself; but in the afternoon sunlight it was a reassuring sight indeed.

When I returned, I found my employer standing in deep absorption before the opened folio of the *Celaeno Fragments*. And once again I had evidence of his strange sensitivity, for I had come into the room very quietly, soundlessly, and his back was turned to me; yet he began to speak the moment I entered.

“My only question is whether there is not danger in giving these notes to the world. Though I ought not to fear that there are many who would place any credence in what I took down from these great stones. Fort is dead, Lovecraft is gone—” He shook his head.

I came up behind him and looked over his shoulder. My eyes fell upon what was obviously a recipe, but so filled was it with strange names, that I looked to the text below. What I read there supplied another link in the damning chain of evidence pointing

to hideous possibilities in the voids of time and space, hitherto unknown to man. For there, in Dr. Shrewsbury's fine script, was written this legend: "The golden mead of the Elder Gods renders the drinker insensible to the effects of time and space, so that he may travel in these dimensions; moreover, it heightens his sensory perceptions so that he remains constantly in a state bordering upon dream . . ."

This far I read before my employer closed the folio and set about sealing it once more.

"The mead!" I exclaimed. "Your mead!"

"Yes, yes, Andrew," he said quickly. "How else did you suppose . . .? But I forget; one ought not to permit one's imagination to trap one."

"Imagination!" I protested. "Is it imagination that I had mud from that island on my shoes this morning, and the stone in my pocket, and the *London Times* in my coat? I don't know—I only suspect in the light of what I've learned here, how it was done—but I know we were there."

He looked at me for a long moment contemplatively.

"Weren't we?" I demanded.

Even then I hoped that somehow he would have a logical, reasonable explanation to offer me; heaven knows how eagerly I would have accepted it! But he only shook his head wearily, touched my arm as if to reassure me, and said, "Yes."

"And that night in June—that second night, after we were in the cave—you went back with your explosive and blasted that hellish place. I heard you scrambling down the rocks, I heard the blast . . ."

"Ah! Then you took some mead that night. You were in my room."

I nodded.

"Perhaps I should have told you. But it was my error—I should

not have taken you along. I was in one phase too careful, and in another too careless, assuming wrongly that you would never know. But now they have seen us, now they know who it is blasting and sealing those doors from their aeon-old borderland—" He shook his head once more. "Now—now it is too late!"

His tone was so ominous that for a moment I could say nothing whatever. Then, a little thickly, I asked, "What do you mean?"

"Even now they are pursuing us. There is activity below Devil Reef off Innsmouth in the city of Y'ha-nthlei, and great beings have come from R'lyeh. Listen! Listen to those hellish footsteps!—But I forget, you cannot, you have not had your sensibilities forever made keener as I had in those twenty years."

"Yes, those twenty years," I repeated, my mind flashing back to that curiously foreboding scene in the library of Miskatonic University. "Where were you in that time?"

"I was on Celaeno—in that great library of ancient monolithic stones with their books and hieroglyphs stolen from the Elder Gods."

He stopped suddenly, cocking his head a little to one side, and after listening in that position very briefly, he began to tremble, his mouth twisted in distaste and loathing, and he turned on me with a curt order to hurry, to carry the remaining material to the Miskatonic University Library, and to come back even faster, for the hour was rapidly approaching evening, and I was not to spend another night in this house. When I returned, he said, everything would be ready for my departure.

So indeed it was, and the professor was more agitated than I had ever previously seen him. I had been subjected to the always maddening delay of red tape pertaining to the acceptance of Dr. Shrewsbury's books and papers, including a searching interview with Dr. Llanfer, the director of the library, who, after a glance through my first load had asked that I be sent into his office so

that he could tell me that he had ordered my employer's papers placed in the locked vault with the single rare copy of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred's *Necronomicon* in the possession of Miskatonic University. The result of this delay was that time passed more quickly than I had thought, for it was at sundown that I returned to the house on Curwen Street.

"Good God! my boy, where were you!" demanded Dr. Shrewsbury.

But he gave me no time to answer, for once again he stopped to listen. And this time I, too, felt what he must have felt—that powerful surging forward of an aura of age-old evil, as if the latent possibilities of the old house's atmosphere had come suddenly into malign life; I, too, heard—at first only a curious water sound, as of something swimming, and then that terrible trembling of the bowels of the earth, shuddering upward from below, *as if some great being walked in the watery places under the earth!*

"You must go at once," said my employer in a troubled voice. "You have the five-pointed stone from the island?"

I nodded.

He seized my arm in a tenacious grip. "Do you remember the formula for summoning the interstellar creatures who serve Hastur?"

Again I nodded.

He took from his pocket the counterpart of the little whistle he had blown upon and also a small phial which, I saw, contained some of that strange golden mead. "Here, then—keep this with you, and the stone, too. The Deep Ones cannot hurt you if you carry the stone; but the stone alone is powerless against the others. Go to Boston, to New York, anywhere—but leave Arkham, leave this accursed place. And if you hear that walker in the depths of the earth, in the waters under the earth, do not hesitate—take the

mead, keep the star by you, and repeat the formula. They will come for you. They will take you to Celaeno, where I am going once again until the others will give up seeking me. But keep the stone; I did not have it, and at first they tortured me—but have no fear, they will not touch you. If you must come, I will be there.” I took the phial, filled with a thousand questions I wanted to ask but could not. For the aura of the house was oppressive with terror; its very air throbbed with menace, and from under the house came such a wave of sheer horror that all my senses cried aloud for escape.

“They are at the mouth of the Miskatonic now,” said the professor thoughtfully. “But I am ready. Some of them are coming up the river—soon now, soon now . . .” He turned on me once more. “But go, Andrew. Go!”

He made as if to thrust me forth, but in his sudden effort he fell sideways and struck one of the shelves nearby so that his glasses were knocked off—and what I saw then sent me screaming from that accursed house on Curwen Street into the fog-bound darkness outside. Did I dream, too, in that frightful flight that creatures with webbed feet and hands whose great batrachian eyes gleamed phosphorescently at me out of the darkness were creeping from the water of the Miskatonic River across the street? I did not hesitate, I did not once pause. Clutching the whistle and the phial of golden liquid close to me, I ran for my life, haunted by the sight of Professor Shrewsbury’s face as I saw it in the half-darkness of that doomed house. *For though I had seen him read his papers and his notes, though he had described appearances, though he had given a thousand evidences of his keen vision, above that strange second sight he seemed to have, in that maddening moment when his glasses were struck from his face, I saw where his eyes should have been the dark pits of empty sockets!*

5.

Only a fortnight has gone by since the events I have chronicled. The house on Curwen Street was totally destroyed by fire on the night of my wild flight, and Dr. Shrewsbury has been presumed to have perished in the holocaust; but though I have pursued the most assiduous inquiry, I have been unable to find proof that any human bones were found in the ruins. I can only suppose that Dr. Shrewsbury somehow made his escape. It seems clear to me now, as I write, under the pressure of a fear far more terrible than that I shared with my one-time employer, that Dr. Shrewsbury had set himself upon the trail of great Cthulhu, intent upon closing all avenues to the Outside. That, I say, is the trend of such evidence as I have been able to amass. And he had learned how to utilize the strange creatures from other, alien dimensions out of time and space, in his pursuit of Cthulhu, intent upon saving the world he knew from enslavement to a ghastly era of aeon-old evil completely beyond the comprehension of mankind!

I have looked up Celaeno. It is that star in the Pleiades which lies between Alcyone and Electra on the one side, and Maia and Taygeta on the other. It does not seem possible—and yet, if what Dr. Shrewsbury wrote or suspected is correct, the dark lake of Hali is not far away, near Aldebaran, the abode of Him Who Is Not To Be Named, Hastur, the Unspeakable, who is served, these ancient legends will have it, by strange, bat-winged creatures who can travel in time and space. . . .

For the past few hours, here in my room in Boston, I have been trying to tell myself again, as so often I have done, that it was all a ghastly dream, one of those strange adventures of mental dislocation which sometimes happen to men. But I am no longer able to say this with much belief. For as I came home this evening from

my frugal supper, I had a glimpse of a shuddersome countenance, and once more that curiously grotesque Tenniel illustration of the footman for the Duchess in *Alice in Wonderland* flashed into mind, and then, those others—those web-handed creatures in the guise of men who haunted my dreams! And now, surely it is not my imagination that is responsible for the conviction that something walks beneath me in the waters of the earth! Surely I, who have never been overly blessed with imagination, cannot be dreaming this!

For out of the depths beneath the house comes a horrible sucking sound, as of great protoplasmic flesh scuffing along ponderously in a place of waters and muck—a sound like that nasty, sloppy, nauseating slithering we heard on that hellish Pacific island just before the Thing came oozing out from behind that hideous carven door! I have locked my room and thrown open the window, but everywhere there is menace—I cannot turn without fear, I fancy I see those great monolithic stones with their terrible bas-reliefs looking out at me from every corner of the room, or Professor Shrewsbury's face with those horrible, pitted sockets where his eyes should have been, or the batrachian frog-men. . . .

And now—now that the Pleiades and Celaeno are above the horizon in the northwest, I have taken the golden mead; I have gone to the window and blown upon that curiously carven whistle Professor Shrewsbury gave me in that last frantic hour together, I have stood there and called forth into the spaceless void of time his words—"Ia! Ia! Hastur! Hastur cf'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!"

The footsteps continue—ghastly, sloshing sounds—they seem just under the house now; and outside there is the terrible slapping sound like that made by those awful web-footed creatures that slithered toward us over the rocks on that Pacific island. . . .

But now—something—Great God! Wings! *What beings at the window!*

Ia! Ia! Hastur fhtagh . . . !

* * * * *

Epilogue from the *Boston Herald* for September 3:

No further clue to the strange and remarkable disappearance of Andrew Phelan, 28, of 17 Thoreau Drive, has been unearthed. It is assumed that the young man effected his disappearance voluntarily; the door of his room was locked and, though one window of his room stood open, there is no evidence to show that he dropped to the ground below or mounted to the roof, both places having been subjected to the most minute scrutiny. No motive can be ascribed for his act. However, a cousin of Mr. Phelan expressed some doubt about his sanity at the time of his disappearance, deposing that he had seemed to be listening for sounds as of some supernatural pursuer. Since this manifestation of irrationality coincides with the strange manuscript he left behind him, it is believed that in some fashion, for reasons unknown, Mr. Phelan made away with himself. . . .

II.

THE WATCHER FROM THE SKY

being

The Deposition of Abel Keane

1.

"ABEL KEANE . . . ABEL KEANE . . . ABEL KEANE. . . ."

Sometimes I am constrained to speak my name aloud, as if to reassure myself that all is as before, that indeed I am Abel Keane; and I find myself walking to the mirror and looking at myself, scrutinizing the familiar lineaments for any sign of change. As if there must be change! As if surely, some time, change must come, the change that marks the experiences of that week. Or was it but a week? Or less? I do not any longer have assurance of anything.

It is a terrible thing to lose faith in the world of daylight and the night of stars, to feel that at any time all the known laws of space and time may be abrogated, may be thrust aside as by some sorcery, by ancient evil known only to a few men, whose voices are indeed voices crying in the wilderness.

I have hesitated until now to tell what I know of the fire which destroyed a great portion of a certain seaport town on the Massachusetts coast, of the abomination which existed there, but events have dictated that I hesitate no longer. There are things men should not know, and it is always difficult for any one man to decide whether to make certain facts known, or to hold them in abeyance. There was a reason for the fire—a reason known only to two people, though surely there were others who suspected—but not outside that shunned town. It has been said that if any man had a vision of the incredible vastnesses of outer space and the

knowledge of what exists there, that alone would drive him stark, raving mad. But there are things that go on within the boundaries of our own small earth which are no less frightening, things that bind us to the entire cosmos, to colossi of time and space, to evil and horror so old, so ancient that the entire history of mankind is but a vapor in the air beside them.

Of such was the reason for that destructive fire, that fire which destroyed far more than it was meant to destroy, block after block of that loathed town across to the Manuxet on the one side and to the shore of the sea on another. They called it arson—but only for a little while. They found some of those little stones—but there was nothing but one mention in the papers of either arson or those peculiar stone pieces. The townspeople saw to that; they were quick to suppress it; their own fire examiners put out an entirely different story. They said that the man who was lost in the fire had fallen asleep beside his lamp and had knocked it over, and that that was the way the fire started. . . .

But it was arson, technically speaking—justifiable arson. . . .

2.

Evil is the special province, surely, of the student of divinity.

Such was I on that Summer night when I unlocked the door of my room at my lodging house, Number 17, Thoreau Drive, in the city of Boston, Massachusetts—and found lying on my bed a strange man, clad in alien garments, lying in a deep sleep from which I could not at first awaken him. Since my door was locked, he must have entered by way of the open window—but of how he had come, by what incredible passage, I was not immediately to know.

After my initial surprise had passed, I examined my visitor. He

was a young man of approximately thirty years of age; he was clean-shaven, dark-skinned, and lithe; he was clothed in loose-flowing robes of a material foreign to me, and he wore sandals made from the leather of some beast whose identity was unknown to me. Though it was evident that he carried various articles in the pockets of that strange clothing, I did not examine them. He was in a sleep so deep that it was impossible to awaken him, and evidence showed that he had virtually fallen across the bed and had gone instantly to sleep.

I discovered at once that there was something familiar about his features—familiar with that strange insistence so commonly associated with people whom one has known before, perhaps casually, but nevertheless has known. Either I had my visitor's acquaintance, or I had seen his picture somewhere. It occurred to me at this point that I might well attempt to learn his identity while he slept, and accordingly I drew a chair up to the bed and sat down beside my visitor, intending to practise auto-suggestion, which I had learned from indulgence in my lesser professional existence—for, while working my way through divinity school, I appeared thrice weekly on public and occasionally on private stages as an amateur hypnotist, and some small study of the human mind had enabled me to accomplish various trivial successes in mind-reading and allied matters

However, deep as his sleep was, he was *aware*.

I cannot explain this even now, but it was as if, though his body slept, his senses did not, for he spoke as I leaned above him, motivated by my intention; and he spoke out of a patent awareness which must be related to his strange way of life about which I learned later, a development from a super-sensory existence.

"Wait," he said. And then, "Be patient, Abel Keane."

And suddenly a most curious reaction was manifest within myself; it felt precisely as if someone or something had invaded me,

as if my visitor spoke to me without words to tell me his name, for his lips did not appear to move, yet I was distinctly aware of the impression of words. "I am Andrew Phelan. I left this room two years ago; I have come back for a little while." Thus directly, thus simply, I knew; and I knew too that I had seen Andrew Phelan's likeness in the Boston papers at the time of his utterly outré disappearance from this very room two years previously, a disappearance never satisfactorily explained.

Excitement possessed me.

So strong was my impression of his *awareness*, despite his aspect of sleep, that I could not forbear asking him, "Where have you been?"

"Celaeno," came his prompt reply, but whether he actually spoke, or whether he merely communicated it to me without words, I cannot now say.

And where was Celaeno? I wondered.

He woke at two o'clock in the morning. Tired myself, I had fallen into a light slumber, from which I was awakened by his hand on my shoulder. I was startled and gazed up to find his firm eyes looking steadily and appraisingly at me. He was still clad in his curious robe, but his first thought was for clothing.

"Have you an extra suit?"

"Yes."

"I shall need to borrow it. We are not unlike in build, and I cannot go out like this. Will you mind?"

"No—by all means."

"I am sorry to have deprived you of your bed, but my long journey tired me very much."

"If I may ask, how did you get in?"

He gestured to the window.

"Why here?"

"Because this room was my point of contact," he answered

enigmatically. He then looked at his watch. "The suit now, if you don't mind. My time is short."

I felt impelled to get the clothing he wished, and did so. When he disrobed, I saw that he was very strong, very muscular, and he moved with an agility that made me doubt my first guess as to his age. I said nothing as he dressed; he remarked casually on the good fit of the suit, which was not my best, though it was neat and clean and had just been pressed. I told him equally as casually that he was welcome to it for as long as he needed it.

"The landlady is still Mrs. Brier?" he asked then.

"Yes."

"I hope you will say nothing to her of me; it would only trouble her."

"To no one?"

"No one."

He began to move to the door, and instantly I apprehended that he meant to be gone. At the same time I was aware of not wanting him to leave without imparting to me more information about the mystery which had remained unsolved for two years. Rashly, I sprang up and threw myself between him and the door.

He looked at me with calm, amused eyes.

"Wait!" I cried. "You can't go like this! What is it you want? Let me get it for you."

He smiled. "I seek evil, Mr. Keane—evil that is more terrible than anything taught in your school of divinity, believe me."

"Evil is my field, Mr. Phelan."

"I guarantee nothing," he replied. "The risks are too great for ordinary men."

An insane impulse took possession of me. I was seized with the urgent desire to accompany my visitor, even if it became necessary to hypnotize him. I fixed his strange eyes with mine, I reached out my hands—and then something happened to me. I found myself

suddenly on another plane, in another dimension, as it were. I felt that I had taken Andrew Phelan's place on the bed, and yet accompanied him in spirit. For instantly, soundlessly, painlessly, I was out of this world. Nothing else would describe the sensations I experienced for the remainder of that night.

I saw, I heard, I felt and tasted and smelled things utterly alien to my consciousness. He did not touch me; he only looked at me. Yet I apprehended instantly that I stood on the edge of an abyss of horror unimaginable! Whether he led me to the bed or whether I made my own way there I do not know; yet it was on the bed that I found myself in the morning after those memorable hours of the remainder of that night. Did I sleep and dream? Or did I lie in hypnosis and know because Phelan willed me to know all that took place? It was better for my sanity to believe that I dreamed.

And what dreams! What magnificent and yet terror-fraught images wrought by the sub-conscious! And Andrew Phelan was everywhere in those dreams. I saw him in that darkness making his way to a bus station, taking a bus; I saw him in the bus, as if I sat beside him; I saw him alight at ancient, legend-haunted and shunned Innsmouth, after changing buses at Arkham. I was beside him when he prowled down along that wrecked waterfront with its sinister ruins—and I saw where he paused, before that disguised refinery, and later at that one-time Masonic hall which now bore over its doorway the curious legend: *Esoteric Order of Dagon*. And yet more—I witnessed the beginning of that strange pursuit, when the first of those hideous batrachian men emerged from the shadows along the Manuxet River and took up the trail of Andrew Phelan, the uncanny silent followers after the seeker of evil, until Phelan turned his steps away from Innsmouth. . . .

All night long, hour after hour, until the sun rose, and dream and actuality became one, and I opened my eyes to look at Andrew

Phelan entering my room. I pulled myself together, smiling sheepishly, and swung to the edge of the bed, where I sat looking at him.

"I think you owe me an explanation," I said.

"It is better not to know too much," he answered.

"One cannot fight evil without knowledge," I retorted.

He said nothing in reply, but I pressed him. He sat down somewhat wearily. Did he not think that some explanation ought to be given me? I demanded. He then countered with an enigmatic suggestion that there were certain age-old horrors which were better left unrevealed; this only excited my curiosity the more. Did it not occur to me, he wanted to know, that there might be certain dislocations in space and time infinitely more terrible than any known horror? Had I never thought that there might be other planes, other dimensions beyond the known planes and dimensions? Had I not considered that space might exist in conterminous folds, that time might be a dimension capable of being traveled backward as well as forward? He spoke to me thus in riddles, and carried on in this fashion despite all my attempts to question him.

"I am only trying to protect you, Keane," he said finally, still with infinite patience.

"Did you escape your pursuer in Innsmouth last night?"

He nodded.

"You knew of him, then?"

"Yes, or you would not have been aware of him, for in your—shall we say, hypnosis?—you could know only such things of which I was cognizant. I suggest to you, Keane, that hypnotism is a dangerous means; I thought it might serve as a warning if it were turned back upon you last night."

"That was not alone hypnotism."

"Perhaps not as you know it." He made a gesture of dismissal.

"Would it be possible for me to rest here for a while today before pursuing my quest? I would not like to be discovered by Mrs. Brier."

"I'll see to it that you're not disturbed."

Even as I spoke, I had made up my mind what to do; I was determined that Andrew Phelan would not put me off so easily, and there was one course left open to me—I could discover certain things for myself. Despite his caution, my visitor had dropped hints and suggestions. Even beyond them, however, there was the mystery of Andrew Phelan itself; that had been extensively recorded in the daily papers of that time; certainly in those accounts I might expect to discover some clue. I adjured Phelan to make himself comfortable, and departed, ostensibly for the college; but instead, once outside, I telephoned to excuse myself from that day's study. Then, after a light breakfast, I took myself off to the Widener Library in Cambridge.

Andrew Phelan had said that he had come from Celaeno. This hint was too patent for me to overlook; so forthwith I set myself to track down Celaeno. I found it sooner than I had expected to find it—but it solved nothing. If anything, it served only to deepen the mystery of Andrew Phelan.

For Celaeno was one of the stars in the Pleiades cluster of Taurus!

I turned next to the files of the newspapers concerning Phelan's vanishing, early in September, 1938. I hoped to discover in the accounts of this remarkable disappearance without trace from out the window of that same room to which he had now returned, something to lead me to some feasible explanation. But as I read the accounts, my perplexity deepened; there was a singularly complete puzzlement expressed in the newspapers. But there were certain dark hints, certain vague and ominous suggestions which fastened to my awareness. Phelan had been employed by Dr. La-

ban Shrewsbury of Arkham. Like Phelan, Dr. Shrewsbury had spent some years in a strange and never-explained absence from his home, to which he had returned as queerly as now Andrew Phelan had come back. Shortly before Phelan's disappearance, Dr. Shrewsbury's house, together with the doctor himself, had been destroyed by fire. Phelan's tasks had apparently been secretarial, but he had spent a good deal of his time in the Library of Miskatonic University in Arkham.

So it seemed to me that the only definite clue offered to me at the Widener was in Arkham; for the records of the Miskatonic University Library should certainly reveal what books Phelan had consulted—presumably in the interests of the late Dr. Shrewsbury. Only an hour had now elapsed; there was ample time for me to pursue my search; so forthwith I took a bus out of Boston for Arkham, and, in a comparatively short time, I was put down not far from the institution within the walls of which I believed I would discover some further information about Andrew Phelan's pursuits.

My inquiry about the records of books used by Andrew Phelan was met with a curious kind of reticence, and resulted in my being shown ultimately into the office of the director of the library, Dr. Llanfer, who wished to know why I sought to consult certain books always kept under lock and key by the express order of the library's directors. I explained that I had become interested in the disappearance of Andrew Phelan, and in the work he had been doing.

His eyes narrowed. "Are you a reporter?"

"I am a student, sir." Fortunately, I had with me my college credentials, and lost no time in showing them to him.

"Very well." He nodded and, however reluctantly, wrote out the desired permission on a slip of paper and handed it to me. "It is only fair to tell you, Mr. Keane, that of the several people who

have consulted these books at length, few—if any—are alive to tell about it."

On this singularly sinister note I was shown out of his office, and presently found myself being conveyed to a little room that was hardly more than a cubicle, where I sat down while the attendant assigned to me placed before me certain books and papers. Chief among them, and obviously the most prized possession of the library, judging by the almost reverent way in which the attendant handled it, was an ancient volume entitled simply *Necronomicon*, by an Arab, Abdul Alhazred. The records showed that Phelan had consulted this volume on several occasions, but, much to my chagrin, it was clear that this volume was not for the uninitiate, for it contained references which for ambiguity were unexcelled. But of one thing I could be certain—the book pertained to evil and horror, to terror and fear of the unknown, to things that walk in the night, and not alone the little night of man, but that vaster, deeper, more mysterious night of the world—the dark side of existence.

I turned from this book in near despair, and found myself looking into a manuscript copy of a book by Professor Shrewsbury: *Cthulhu in the Necronomicon*. And in these pages, quite by accident—for this book, too, consisted of learned and scholarly paragraphs concerning the lore of the Arab, most of them utterly beyond my comprehension—I came upon a certain reference which imparted to me, in the light of what small experience I had already had, a frightening chill and a feeling of the utmost dread. For, as I scanned the pages with their enigmatic allusions to beings and places utterly alien to me, I found in the midst of a quotation purporting to be from another book entitled the *R'lyeh Text*, the following: "*Great Cthulhu shall rise from R'lyeh, Hastur the Unspeakable shall return from the dark star which is in*

the Hyades near Aldebaran . . . Nyarlathotep shall howl forever in the darkness where he abideth, Shub-Niggurath shall spawn his thousand young . . ."

I read—and read again. It was incredible, damnable—but for the second time within twenty-four hours, I had come upon reference to unbelievable spaces, and to stars—to a star in the Hyades, a star in Taurus—and surely it could be none other than Celaeno!

And, as if in mocking answer to the question which loomed so large before me, I turned over this manuscript, and found below it a portfolio labeled in a strong, if spidery hand: *Celaeno Fragments!* I drew it toward me, and found it sealed. At this, the aged attendant, who had been observing me closely, came over.

"It has never been opened," he said.

"Not even by Mr. Phelan?"

He shook his head. "Since it came by Mr. Phelan's hand, with Dr. Shrewsbury's seal on it, we do not believe he had access to it. We do not know."

I looked at my watch. Time was passing now, and I meant to go on to Innsmouth before I completed my day. Reluctantly, and yet with a strange sense of foreboding, I pushed away the manuscripts and books.

"I will come again," I promised. "I want to get to Innsmouth before too much of the day has gone."

The attendant favored me with a curious and reflective gaze. "Yes, it is better to visit Innsmouth by day," he said finally.

I pondered this while the old man gathered up the papers and books. Then I said, "That is surely a curious statement to make, Mr. Peabody. Is there anything wrong with Innsmouth?"

"Ah, do not ask me. *I* have never gone there. I have no desire to go there. There are strange things enough in Arkham, without the need for going on to Innsmouth. But I have heard

things—terrible things, Mr. Keane, such things that it may well be said of them that it is of no account whatever whether or not they are true, but of account only that they are being said. What they do say of the Marshes, who have the refinery there . . .”

“Refinery!” I cried, remembering my dream.

“Yes. It was old Obed Marsh first, old Captain Obed—they said—well, what does it matter? He is gone, and now it is Ahab who is there, Ahab Marsh—his great-grandson—and he is no longer young. But he is not old, either; they do not get very old in Innsmouth.”

“What did they say of Obed Marsh?”

“It does not matter to tell it, I suppose. Perhaps it is an old wives’ tale—that he was leagued with the devil and brought a great plague to Innsmouth in 1846, and that those who came after him were bound by compacts with unearthly beings from beyond that Devil Reef off Innsmouth Harbor, and brought about the destruction by dynamite of many old houses and the wharves along the seashore there during the winter of ’twenty-seven and ’eight. There are not many living there, and no one likes the Innsmouth people.”

“Race prejudice?”

“It is something about them—they do not seem like people—that is, people like the rest of us. I saw one of them once—he made me think—you may think it an old men’s aberration, but I assure you it is not; he made me think of a frog!”

I was shaken. The creature who had so shadowily crept after Andrew Phelan in my dream or vision of the night before had seemed bestially frog-like. I was at the same time possessed of the urgent desire to go to Innsmouth and see for myself the places of my dream-haunted repose.

Yet when I stood before Hammond’s Drug Store in Market Square, waiting for the ancient and shunned bus which carried

venturesome travelers to Innsmouth and went on to Newburyport, I had a sense of impending danger so strong that I could not shake it off. Despite my insistent curiosity, I was sharply, keenly aware of a kind of sixth sense prompting me not to take the bus driven by that queer, sullen-visaged fellow, who brought the bus to a stop and came out to walk briefly, suggestively stooped, into Hammond's before setting forth on the journey to Innsmouth, the final object of my somewhat aimless search that day.

I did not yield to that prompting, but climbed into the bus, which I shared with but one other passenger, whom I knew instinctively to be an Innsmouth resident, for he, too, had a strange cast of features, with odd, deep creases in the sides of his neck, a narrow-headed fellow who could not have been more than forty, with the bulging, watery blue eyes and flat nose and curiously undeveloped ears which I was to find so shockingly common in that shunned seaport town toward which the bus soon began to roll. The driver, too, was manifestly an Innsmouth man, and I began to understand what Mr. Peabody had meant when he spoke of the Innsmouth people as seeming somehow "not like people." To the end of comparison with that following figure of my dream, I scrutinized both my fellow-passenger and the driver as closely, if furtively, as I could; and I was somewhat relieved to come to the conclusion that there was a subtle difference. I could not put my finger on it, but the follower of my dream seemed malign, in contrast to these people, who had merely that appearance so common to cretins and similar unfortunate individuals bearing the stigmata of lower intelligence in the realm of the sub-normal more especially than that of the abnormal.

I had never before been to Innsmouth. Having come down from New Hampshire to pursue my divinity studies, I had had no occasion to travel beyond Arkham. Therefore, the town as I saw it as the bus approached it down the slope of the coast-line

there, had a most depressing affect on me, for it was strangely dense, and yet seemed devoid of life. No cars drove out to pass us coming in, and of the three steeples rising above the chimney-pots and the crouching gambrel roofs and peaked gables, many of them sagging with decay, only one had any semblance whatsoever of use, for the others were weatherbeaten, with gaps in them where shingles had been torn away, and badly needed paint. For that matter, the entire town seemed to need paint—all, that is, save two buildings we passed, the two buildings of my dream, the refinery and that imposing, pillared hall standing among the churches which clustered about the radial point of the town's streets, with its black and gold sign on the pediment, so vividly remembered from my experience of the previous night—the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*. This structure, like that of the Marsh Refining Company along the Manuxet River, seemed to have been given a coat of paint only recently. Apart from this, and a single store of the First National chain, all the buildings in what was apparently the business district of the town were repellently old, with paint peeling from them, and their windows badly in need of washing. It was so, too, of the town generally, though the old residential streets of Broad, Washington, Lafayette, and Adams, where lived still those who were left of Innsmouth's old families—the Marshes, the Gilmans, the Eliots, and the Waites—were of a fresher appearance, not so much in obvious need of paint as of refurbishing, for the grounds grew wild and rank, and in many cases, fences—now overgrown with vines—had been constructed to make the casual view of passersby different.

Repelled as I was by the Innsmouth people, I stood for a few moments on the curb, after having left the bus and ascertained the hour when it would return to Arkham—at seven that evening—wondering just what course it would be best to follow. I had no desire to speak to the people of Innsmouth, for I had the strong-

est of forebodings that to do so was to court subtle and insidious danger; yet I continued to be impelled by the curiosity which had brought me here. It occurred to me, as I stood pondering, that the manager of the First National chain store might very well not be one of the Innsmouth people; it was the custom of the chain to move its managers around, and there was just a chance that the man in charge of this store was an outsider—for among these people, it was inevitable that anyone from beyond the immediate vicinity would be made to feel tangibly that he was an outsider. Accordingly, I made my way over to the corner where the store stood, and entered it.

Contrary to my expectations, there were no clerks, but only a man of middle age, who was at work on a prosaic display of canned goods as I entered and asked for the manager. But clearly, he was the manager; he did not bear any of those oddly shocking distinguishing marks so common to the people of Innsmouth; so he was, as I had guessed, an outsider. I observed with a faint sense of unpleasant distaste that he was startled to look at me, and seemed hesitant to speak, but I realized immediately that this was no doubt due to his isolation among these curiously decayed people.

Having introduced myself, and observed aloud that I could recognize him for an outsider, like myself, I at once pursued my inquiry. What was it about these Innsmouth people? I wanted to know. What was the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*? And what was being said about Ahab Marsh?

His reaction was instantaneous. Nor was it entirely unexpected. He became agitated, he glanced fearfully toward the entrance to the store, and then came over to seize me almost roughly by the arm.

"We don't talk about such things here," he said in a harsh whisper.

His nervous fear was only too manifest.

"I'm sorry if I distressed you," I went on, "but I'm only a casual traveler and I'm curious as to why such a potentially fine port should be all but abandoned. Indeed, it is virtually abandoned; the wharves have not been repaired, and many business places seem closed."

He shuddered. "Do *they* know you are asking questions?"

"You are the first person to whom I have spoken."

"Thank God! Take my advice and leave town as soon as you can. You can take a bus . . ."

"I came in on the bus. I want to know something about the town."

He looked at me indecisively, glanced once more toward the entrance, and then, turning abruptly and walking along a counter toward a curtained door which apparently shut off his own quarters, he said, "Come along with me, Mr. Keane."

In his own rooms at the rear of the store, he began, however reluctantly, to talk in harsh whispers, as if he feared the very walls might hear. What I wanted to know, he said, was impossible to tell, because there was no *proof* of it. All was talk, talk and the terrible decay of isolated families, intermarrying generation after generation. That accounted in part for what he called "the Innsmouth look." It was true, old Captain Obed Marsh held commerce with the far corners of the earth, and he brought strange things—and some said, strange practises like that seafarers' kind of pagan worship called the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*—back to Innsmouth with him. It was said that he held stranger commerce with creatures that rose in the dark of the moon out of the deep sea beyond Devil Reef and met him at the reef, a mile and a half out from shore, but he knew of no one who had seen them, though it was said that in the winter of the year when the Federal government had destroyed the waterfront buildings, a submarine had gone out

and discharged torpedoes *straight down* into the unfathomable depths beyond Devil Reef. He spoke persuasively and well; perhaps indeed he knew no more, but I felt undeniably the lacunae in his story—the unanswered questions being inherent in all that he said.

There were stories about Captain Obed Marsh, yes. Because of them, there were stories about all the Marshes. But there were stories about the Waites, the Gilmans, the Ornes, and the Eliots, too—about all the old, one-time wealthy families. And it was true that it was not wise to linger in the vicinity of the Marsh Refining Company building, or near the Order of Dagon Hall. . . .

At this point our conversation was interrupted by the tinkling of the bell announcing a customer, and Mr. Hendreson immediately left to answer the summons. I peered curiously from between the folds of the curtain and saw that a woman had come in—an Innsmouth woman, for her appearance was instantly chilling and repulsive; there was something more than just similarity to the men about her, there was a kind of almost reptilian menace, and she spoke in a thick mutation of speech, though Hendreson seemed to understand it all right and waited on her without comment of any kind, save to answer her questions with an air that was rather more than just civil, rather subservient.

"That was one of the Waite women," he said in answer to my question when he returned. "They're all like that—and the Marsh women were before them. The Marshes are all gone now, all except Ahab and the two old women."

"The refinery still runs, then?"

"A little. The Marshes still have some ships; there was a long time after the government was here when they had nothing at all in the way of ships; then in the middle thirties they bought a few again, this Ahab came up from nobody knows where, just came in on a ship one night, they say, and took over where the Marshes

left off. Cousin or great-grandson, they say. Saw him once, and that at a distance. Doesn't go out much—except to the Hall—the Marshes always did sort of run that show."

The *Esoteric Order of Dagon*, he explained in response to my insistent prying, was a kind of ancient worship, pagan certainly, and outsiders were rigidly excluded from any knowledge of it. It was not healthy even to ask about it. My schooling rebelled at this, and I demanded to know what part the ministers of the other churches were playing in this? To this he responded with a further question: why not ask denominational headquarters for this district? I would discover that the various denominations disowned their own churches, and the pastors of those churches had sometimes simply disappeared, and at other times had undergone strange reversions to primitive and pagan ceremonies in their worship.

Everything he said was disturbing far beyond anything within the limits of my experience. And yet, what he said was not nearly so terrifying as what remained only implied in his words—the vague hints of terrifying evil, of evil from *outside*, the hideous suggestiveness of what had taken place between the Marshes and those creatures from the deep, the lurking unvoiced assumption of what went on at the meetings of the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*. Something had happened here in 1928, something terrible enough to be kept out of the press, something to bring the Federal government down to the scene and to justify the havoc wrought along the ocean's edge in the wharf district of this old fishing town. I knew enough Biblical history to know that Dagon was the ancient fish-like god of the Philistines, who rose from the waters of the Red Sea, but there was ever present in my thoughts the belief that the Dagon of Innsmouth was but a fictive mask of that earlier pagan God, that the Dagon of Innsmouth was the symbol of something noxious and infinitely terrible, something that might ac-

count not only for the curious aspect of the Innsmouth people, but also for the fact that Innsmouth was shunned and forsaken, let alone by the rest of the towns in its vicinity, and forgotten by the outside world.

I pressed the storekeeper for something definite, but he could not or would not give it; indeed, he began to act, as time wore on, as if I had already been told far too much, his agitation increased, and presently I thought it best to take my leave, though Henderson implored me not to carry on any overt investigation, saying at the last that people had been known to "drop out of sight, and the Lord alone knows where. Nobody ever found a clue as to where they went, and I reckon nobody ever will. But *they* know."

On this sinister note I took my leave.

Time did not permit much further exploration, but I managed to walk about a few of the streets and lanes of Innsmouth near the bus station, and found everything in a state of curious decay, and most of the buildings giving off besides that familiar odor of old wood and stone, a strange watery essence as of the sea. Farther I could not go, for I was disturbed by the queer glances given me by the few inhabitants I passed on the streets, and I was ever conscious of being under surveillance from behind closed doors and window curtains; but most of all, I was horribly aware of a kind of aura of malevolence, so keenly aware of it indeed that I was glad when at last the time came for me to take the bus and make my way back to Arkham and thence to my room in Boston.

3.

Andrew Phelan was waiting for me when I returned.

The night was almost half gone, but Phelan had not left my room. I thought he looked at me a little pityingly when I entered.

"I have often wondered why it is that human curiosity is insatiable," he said, "but I suppose it is too much to expect that one who has had an experience like yours, so far from the norm of things as most of us know it, should accept it without seeking explanation other than that I gave you."

"You know?"

"Where you have been? Yes. Did anyone follow you, Abel?"

"I didn't look to see."

He shook his head mutely. "And did you learn what you sought to learn?"

I confessed that I was more puzzled than ever. And, yes, a little more disturbed than I had been at first. "Celaeno," I said. "What have you been telling me?"

"We are both there," he said bluntly, "Dr. Shrewsbury and I."

For a moment I thought he was resorting to bluff; but there was something in his attitude that forbade levity. He was grim, unsmiling.

"You think that is impossible? You are bound by your own laws. Do not think further of it, but simply accept what I say for the time being. For years Dr. Shrewsbury and I have been on the trail of a great evil being, determined to close the avenues by which he may return to terrestrial life out of his enchanted prison beneath the sea. Listen to me, Abel, and understand in what deadly peril you stood this afternoon in accursed Innsmouth."

Thereupon he launched into a soul-shaking account of incredible, ancient evil, of Great Old Ones akin to the elemental forces—the Fire-Being, Cthugha; the Water-Being, Cthulhu; the Lords of Air—Lloigor, Hastur the Unspeakable, Zhar, and Ithaqua; the Earth Creature, Nyarlathotep, and others—long ago cast out and imprisoned by the spells of the Elder Gods, who exist near the star Betelgeuze—the Great Old Ones who have their minions, their secret followers among men and beasts, whose task it is to

prepare the way for their second coming, for it is their evil intention to come again and rule the universe as once they did after their breaking away and escape from the domain of the Ancient Ones. What he told me then evoked frightening parallels to what I had read in those forbidden books at the Library of Miskatonic University only that afternoon, and he spoke in a voice of such conviction, and with such assurance, that I found myself shaken free from the orthodox learning to which I had been accustomed.

The human mind, faced with something utterly beyond its ken, inevitably reacts in one of two ways—its initial impulse is to reject in toto, its secondary to accept tentatively; but in the dread unfolding of Andrew Phelan's explanation there was the damnable, inescapable fact that only such an explanation would fit *all* the events which had taken place since his strange appearance in my room. Of the abominable tapestry of explanation which Phelan wove, several aspects were most striking, and at the same time most incredible. Dr. Shrewsbury and he, Phelan said, had been in search of the "openings" by means of which great Cthulhu might rise from where he lies sleeping "in his house at R'lyeh," an undersea place, Cthulhu apparently being amphibious; under the protection of an ancient, enchanted five-pointed carved grey stone from ancient Mnar, they need not fear the minions who served the Great Old Ones—the Deep Ones, the Shoggoths, the Tcho-Tcho People, the Dholes and the Voormis, the Valusians and all similar creatures—but their activities had finally aroused the superior beings directly serving great Cthulhu, against whom the five-pointed star is powerless; therefore, Dr. Shrewsbury and he had taken flight by summoning from interstellar spaces strange bat-like creatures, the servants of Hastur, Him Who Is Not To Be Named, ancient rival of Cthulhu, and, after having partaken of a golden mead which rendered them insensible to the effects of time and space and enabled them to travel in these dimensions, while

at the same time heightening their sensory perceptions to an unheard-of extent, they set out for Celaeno, where they had resumed their studies in the library of monolithic stones with books and hieroglyphs stolen from the Elder Gods by the Great Old Ones at, and subsequent to, the time of the revolt from the benign authority of those Gods. Nevertheless, though on Celaeno, they were not unaware of what took place on earth, and they had learned that commerce was again being carried on between the Deep Ones and the strange people of haunted Innsmouth—and one of those people at least was a leader in preparing the way for the return of Cthulhu. To forestall that one, Dr. Shrewsbury had sent him, Andrew Phelan, back to earth.

"What was the commerce between the Innsmouth people and the creatures who came up out of the sea to Devil Reef?"

"Surely that should have been obvious to you in Innsmouth?"

"That storekeeper said it was too much intermarriage."

Phelan smiled grimly. "Yes—but not among those old families of Innsmouth; it was with those evil beings from the deep, from Y'ha-nthlei below Devil Reef. And the *Esoteric Order of Dagon* is but a deceptive name for their organization of worshippers to do the bidding of Cthulhu and his servants to prepare the way, to open the gate into this upper world for their hellish dominion!"

I pondered this shocking revelation for a full minute before I offered anything more. Accepting everything Phelan had said—and his attitude seemed to say that it made no difference to him whether or not I believed him—it would appear that, as soon as his mission had been accomplished, Phelan himself planned to return to Celaeno. I put that to him. Yes, he admitted, it was so.

"Then you already know who it is in Innsmouth who is leading the people back once more to the worship of Cthulhu and the traffic with the Deep Ones?"

"Let us say rather that I suspect; it is the evident one."

"Ahab Marsh."

"Ahab Marsh, yes. It was his great-grandfather, Obed, who began it, Obed with his wide travels and the strange places he visited. Obed, we know now, encountered the Deep Ones on an island in the mid-Pacific—an island where no island should have been—and he opened the way for them to come to Innsmouth. The Marshes grew wealthy, but they were no more immune to that accursed physiological change than the others in that shunned and unholy settlement. The taint is in the blood now; it has been there for generations. The events of 1928-1929 when the Federal Government invaded Innsmouth put a stop to it for only a few years, less than a decade. With the coming of Ahab Marsh—and none knows whence he came, though the two old Marsh women who were left accepted him as their own—the thing began once more, and this time less overtly, so that this time there will be no calling out to the Federals. I have come out of the sky to watch and prevent horror from being spawned again on this earth. I cannot fail; I must succeed."

"But how?"

"Events will show. Tomorrow I am going to Innsmouth where I will continue to watch until I can take action."

"The storekeeper told me that all outsiders are watched and regarded with suspicion."

"But I will go in their guise."

All that night I lay sleepless beside Andrew Phelan, torn by the desire to accompany him. If his story were the figment of his imagination, surely it was a glorious and wondrous tale, calculated to stir the pulse and fire the mind; if it were not, then with equal certainty, it was as much my responsibility as it was his to lay hands upon and destroy the evil at Innsmouth, for evil is the ancient enemy of all good, whether as we who are Christians un-

derstand it or whether as it is understood in some prehistoric mythos. My studies in divinity seemed suddenly almost frivolous in contrast to what Phelan had narrated, though I confess that at that time I still entertained doubts of some magnitude, for how could I do else? Were not the monstrous entities of evil Phelan conjured up well-nigh impossible to conceive, to say nothing of expecting belief in them? Indeed they were. Yet it is man's spiritual burden that he finds it so easy to doubt, always to doubt, and so difficult to believe even in the simplest things. And the striking parallel which forced itself upon me, a divinity student, a parallel which could not be overlooked, was plain—the similarity between the tale of the revolt of the Great Old Ones against the Elder Gods, and that other, more universally known tale of the revolt of Satan against the forces of the Lord.

In the morning I told Phelan of my decision.

He shook his head. "It is good of you to want to help, Abel. But you have no real understanding of what it means. I've given you only a spare outline—nothing more. I would not be justified in involving you."

"The responsibility is mine."

"No, the responsibility is always that of the man who knows the facts. There is far more even than Dr. Shrewsbury and I already know to be learned. Indeed, I may say that we ourselves have hardly penetrated the perimeter of the whole—think, then, of how little you know!"

"I conceive it as a duty."

He gazed at me musingly, and I saw for the first time that his eyes were far older than his thirty years. "Let me see, you're twenty-seven now, Abel. Do you realize that if you persist in this decision, you may not have a future?"

I set out patiently to argue with him; I had already dedicated my life to the pursuit and destruction of evil, and this evil he of-

ferred me in his company was something more tangible than the evil that lurks in men's souls—he smiled and shook his head at this—and so we spent words back and forth. In the end he consented, though with a kind of cynicism I found galling.

The first step in our pursuit of the evil at Innsmouth was to shift our lodgings from Boston to Arkham, not only because of the proximity of Arkham to Innsmouth, but also because of the elimination of the risk of Phelan's being seen and recognized by my landlady, who would certainly focus highly undesirable publicity on him. And such publicity, in turn, would result in knowledge of his presence terrestrially once again being communicated to those creatures who had previously set out after Dr. Shrewsbury and Andrew Phelan and so forced their flight. No doubt the chase would begin again, in any case, but hopefully not before Phelan had accomplished what he had come back to do.

We moved that night.

Phelan did not think it wise of me to relinquish my Boston room, however; so I took a lease on it for a month—never dreaming how soon I would return to those familiar walls.

In Arkham we found a room in a comparatively new house on Curwen Street. Phelan later confided that the house stood on the site of Dr. Shrewsbury's home, which had been destroyed by fire coincident with his final disappearance. Having settled ourselves and carefully explained to our new landlady that we might be absent from our room for many hours at a time, we proceeded to assemble those properties which would be necessary for us to take up a temporary residence among the Innsmouth people—for Phelan deemed it not only wise but mandatory that, in order to remain in Innsmouth comparatively free of observation, we must be made up to look as much like the Innsmouthers as possible.

In the late afternoon of that day, Phelan set to work. I discovered in a very short time that he was a consummate artist with his

hands; my features began to change utterly—from a rather innocuous-looking, and perhaps even weak-appearing young fellow, I aged skillfully and began to assume the typical narrow head, flat nose, and curious ears so common to the Innsmouth people. He worked over my entire face; my mouth thickened, my skin became coarse-pored, my color vanished behind a grey pallor, horrible to contemplate; and he managed even to convey a bulging and batrachian expression about my eyes and to give my neck that oddly repellant appearance of having deep, almost scaly creases! I would not have known myself, after he had finished, but the operation took better than three hours, and at the end of that time it was as permanent as it could be expected to be.

"It is right," he decided after he had examined me, and then, tirelessly, without a word, he set about to give himself a similar appearance.

Early the next morning we left the house for Innsmouth, en-training for Newburyport, and thus coming into Innsmouth on the bus from the other side, a deliberate maneuver on Phelan's part. By noon of that day we were established, amid a few interested and curiously searching glances from the slovenly workers in the place, in the Gilman House, Innsmouth's lone open hotel—or rather, in what was left of it, for, like so many buildings in the town, it was in a very bad state of decay. We registered as Amos and John Wilken, cousins, for Phelan had discovered that Wilken was an old Innsmouth name not at present represented by any member of the family living in that accursed seaport city. The elderly clerk in the Gilman House had given us a few sharp-eyed glances, and his bulging eyes stared at the names on his register. "Related to old Jed Wilken, be ye?" he asked. My companion nodded briskly. "Man can see ye belong here," the clerk said, with an almost obscene chuckle. "Got business?"

"We're taking a little vacation," answered Phelan.

"Come to the right place, then, ye did. Things to see here, all right, *if ye're the right kind.*"

Again that distastefully suggestive chuckle.

Once alone in our room, Phelan became more tense than ever. "We've done well so far, but this is only the beginning. We have a good deal of work to do. I have no doubt the clerk will pass the word around that we are relatives of Jed Wilken; that will satisfy the first questions of the curious. Moreover, our appearance as 'tainted', like the rest of the Innsmouthers, in the vicinity of those places where we might expect to encounter Ahab Marsh will not excite undue comment—but I am convinced that we must avoid being seen too closely by Ahab himself."

"But what good will it do us to watch Ahab?" I countered. "If you are already reasonably certain that it is he . . ."

"There is more to be learned about Ahab than you think, Abel. Perhaps more than I think. We know the Marsh family, we know the line, Dr. Shrewsbury and I. But nowhere in that family tree can we find any trace of a Marsh named Ahab."

"Yet he is here."

"Yes, indeed. But how came he here?"

We went out soon after, having taken care to keep to old clothes, similar to those we had worn on our arrival, so that we might not give off an impression of undue affluence and so attract unwelcome attention. Phelan set out immediately for the vicinity of the waterfront, detouring only once to examine the Order of Dagon Hall at New Church Green, and ending up at last not far from the Marsh Refining Company. It was there, not long after our arrival, that I first had sight of our quarry.

Ahab Marsh was tall, though he walked in an odd, stooped manner; and his gait, too, was very strange, being not at all regular and rhythmic, but rather jerky, and even for the short distance

from the refinery to the closely curtained car in which he rode, the fashion in which he made progress was very evident; his was a gait that might have been called *inhuman*, for it was not so much a walk as a kind of shuffling or lurching forward, and it was movement which had little counterpart even among the other Innsmouthers, for, whatever the changes in their aspects, their walk, shuffling as it was, was essentially human locomotion. As I have said, Ahab Marsh was taller than most of his fellow citizens, but his face was not much different from the features so common in Innsmouth, save in that it seemed somehow less coarse, and more greasy, as if the skin (for, despite its sometimes ichthyic appearance, it *was* skin) were of a finer texture, this in turn suggesting that the Marsh breed was slightly superior to that of the average Innsmouter. It was impossible to see his eyes, for they were concealed by spectacles of a deep cobalt hue, and his mouth, while in many ways similar to that of the natives, was yet different in that it seemed to protrude more, doubtless because Ahab Marsh's chin receded almost into nothingness. He was, literally, a man without a chin, at sight of which I experienced a shudder of horror unlike any I had before undergone, for it gave him an appearance so frighteningly ichthyic that I could not but be repelled by it. He seemed also to be earless, and wore his hat low on what appeared to be a head devoid of hair; his neck was scrawny and, though he was otherwise almost impeccably dressed, his hands were encased in black gloves, or rather, *mittens*, as I saw at second glance.

We were not observed. I had gazed at our quarry only in the most apparently casual manner, while Phelan did not look directly at him at all, but utilized a small pocket mirror to examine him even more indirectly. In a few moments Ahab Marsh had vanished into his car and driven away.

"A hot day for gloves," was all that Phelan said.

"I thought so."

"I fear it is as I suspected," Phelan added then, but this he would not explain. "We shall see."

We repaired to another section of the city to wander through Innsmouth's narrow, shaded streets and lanes, away from the region of the Manuxet River and the falls, close to which the Marsh Refinery rose on a little bluff. Phelan walked in deep and troubled contemplation; it was evident that he was in puzzled thought, which I did not interrupt. I marvelled at the incredible state of arrested decay so prevalent in this old seaport town, and even more at the curious lack of activity; it was as if by far the majority of the inhabitants rested during the day, for very few of them were to be seen on the streets.

The night in Innsmouth, however, was destined to be different.

As darkness came, we made our way to the Order of Dagon Hall. At his one previous visit, Phelan had discovered that entrance to the hall for the ceremonies could be had only by display of a curious fish-like seal, and during the time I had tried to trace his movements here, he had fashioned several of them, of which the most perfect he had reserved for his own use, and that most closely resembling it he held for me, if I cared to use it, though he preferred that I take no such risk and remain outside the Hall.

This, however, I was unwilling to do. It was patent that a great many people were coming to the Hall, all evidently members of the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*, and I had the conviction that events I might not wish to miss might take place—this despite Phelan's insistent warning that we were placing ourselves in extreme danger by attending one of the forbidden ceremonies. Nothing daunted, I went doggedly along.

Fortunately, our seals were not challenged; I shudder to imagine what might have happened if they had been. I believe that more than anything else, our having the Innsmouth look, so skillfully fabricated, accounted for our easy passage into the Hall. We

were the focus of obvious attention, but it was plain that word of our identity as members of the Wilken clan had got around, for there was neither maleficence nor challenge in the eyes of men and women who looked on occasion in our direction. We took seats near the door, meaning to be off immediately if it seemed wise to leave and, having settled ourselves, looked around the room. The hall was large and murky; its windows were shut off by black screens, apparently of tar-paper, so that it had the appearance of an old-fashioned theatre—that is, a hall converted to the showing of moving pictures when that great industry was in its infancy. Moreover, there was a brooding dusk in the room that seemed to rise from the vicinity of a small dais up front. But it was not the murkiness of the hall that seized hold of my imagination—it was the ornaments.

For the hall was decorated with strange stone carvings of fish-like beings. I recognized several of them as very similar to certain primitive sculptures which had come out of Ponape, and certain others bore a disturbing resemblance to inexplicable carvings found on Easter Island, as well as in the Mayan ruins of Central America, and the Inca remains of Peru. Even in this murky light it was clearly to be seen that these sculptures and carvings were not done by Innsmouth hands, but that they were evidently from some foreign port; indeed, they might well have come from Ponape, since the Marsh boats crossed the seas as far as the most distant corners of civilization. Only a very dim artificial light burned, at the foot of the stage; nothing else helped to illumine the hall, yet it seemed to me that the sculptures and bas-reliefs had a hellish suggestiveness that was soul-stirring and frightening, an out-of-this-world look which was profoundly agitating—for it spoke of time long gone by, of great ages before our time, ages when the world and perhaps the universe were young. Apart from these, and from a miniature of what must have been a vast, amorphous

octopus-like creature, which occupied the center of the dais, the hall was bare of everything in the way of decorations—nothing but rickety chairs, a plain table on the dais, and those tightly curtained windows to offset the effect of those alien bas-reliefs and sculptures, and this lack of everything only served to heighten their hideousness.

I glanced at my companion but found him gazing expressionlessly straight before him. If he had examined the bas-reliefs and sculptures, he had done so less openly. I felt that it would not be wise any longer to stare at those oddly disturbing ornaments; so I followed Phelan's example. It was still possible, however, to notice that the hall was rapidly filling up with more people than the events of the day would have persuaded me to believe still lived in the city. There were close to four hundred seats, and soon all were filled. When it became evident that there were still others to be seated, Phelan left his seat and stood up against the wall near the entrance. I did likewise, so that a pair of decrepit oldsters, hideously changed in appearance from the younger element—for the creases at their necks had grown more scaly, and were deeper, and their eyes bulged glassily—could sit down. Our relinquishment of our seats passed unnoticed, for a few others were already standing along the walls.

It must have been close to half past nine—for the summer evening was long, and darkness did not fall early—before anything took place. Then suddenly there appeared through a rear entrance a middle-aged man clad in strangely decorated vestments; at first glance his appearance was priestly, but it was soon manifest that his vestments were blasphemously decorated, with the same batrachian and fish-like representations which in plaque and sculpture ornamented the hall. He came to the image on the dais, touched it reverently with his hands, and began to speak—not Latin or Greek, as I had at first supposed he might speak, but an

odd, garbled language of which I could not understand a word, a horribly suggestive series of mouthings which immediately started a kind of low, almost lyrical humming response from the audience.

At this point Phelan touched my arm, and slipped away out the entrance. I was meant to follow, and did so, despite my reluctance to leave the ceremonies just as they were beginning.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Ahab Marsh is not there."

"He may still come."

Phelan shook his head. "I think not. We must look for him elsewhere."

He walked with such purpose that I assumed, correctly, as it turned out, that he knew or suspected where he might find Ahab Marsh. I had thought that Phelan would go directly to the old Marsh home on Washington Street, but he did not; my second guess was that he would lead the way back to the Refinery, and in this I was certain that I was correct, until we reached the Refinery, crossed the bridge over the Manuxet nearby, and went on to strike out along the seashore beyond the harbor at the mouth of the river. The night was dark, save for a waning late-rising moon, pushing up out of the eastern horizon, and making its glade yellowly on the water, if feebly; stars shone above, a bank of dark clouds lay low along the southern rim of heaven, a light east wind blew.

"Do you know where you're going, Phelan?" I asked finally.

"Yes."

We were following a little-used road which had been marked "Private," and which led crazily along the coast there, over stones and sand, rocks and ruts. In one place Phelan dropped to his knees and lightly touched the sandy ruts.

"This road has been recently used."

The sand was freshly disturbed, unlike the caked sand all around. "By Ahab?" I asked.

He nodded thoughtfully. "There is a little cove just ahead. This is Marsh land—old Obed bought it more than a century ago."

We hastened on, though we instinctively walked with more caution.

On the shore of the sheltered cove we found the curtained car in which Ahab Marsh had that day left the Refinery. Unafraid, perhaps because of what he knew he would find there, my companion went directly up to it. There was no one in the car, but on the back seat, thrown carelessly down, were clothes—a man's clothes—and even in the dark I recognized the suit Ahab Marsh had worn that day.

But Phelan closed the car door and hurried around to the other side, past the car down to the sea's edge, where he dropped to his knees once more and looked down. The shoes were there, I saw when I knelt at my companion's side. The socks, too—thick, woolen socks, though the day had been very warm. And the shape of the shoes in that wan moonlight was strangely upsetting—how wide they were! how curiously shaped!—at one time surely, normal shoes, if a little large, but now plainly *worn* out of shape, as if the foot inside had been—well, as if a kind of distorting disease had afflicted the wearer's feet.

And there was something else, something all the more hideously frightening in that yellow moonlight, with the sea's sound and that other sound—the sound to which Phelan cautioned me to listen: a kind of distant ululation, non-human in origin, coming not from the land at all, but from the sea, far far out, the sea—and Devil Reef, haunted in the channels of my memory by everything I had heard from that storekeeper and later on from my companion, the stories of strange, evil, unholy traffic between sea-creatures and the people of Innsmouth, the things Obed Marsh had found on Ponape and that other island, the terror of the late nineteen-twenties with the strange disappearances of young people, human sacrifices put to sea and never returned! It rose in the

east and came in on the wind, a ghastly chanting that sounded like something from another world, a liquid ululation, a watery sound defying description, but evil beyond any experience of man. And it rode the wind into my horrified consciousness while my eyes were fixed still to that terrible evidence so plain on the sandy beach between the place where Ahab Marsh's shoes and socks were, and where the water began—*the footprints, not of human feet, but of pedal extremities that were squat, with elongated digits, thick, wide, and webbed!*

4.

Of the events that came after, I hesitate to write, and yet from the moment Andrew Phelan knew, there was no need for further delay. It was Ahab Marsh who was the object of his search—and only to a considerably lesser degree the worshippers in the Order of Dagon Hall. The sacrifices, he said, had been going on again, with greater secrecy, just as in Obed Marsh's day. Ever since the debacle of 1928-1929, the Innsmouthers had been more careful, those who had been left, and those who had filtered back into the town after the Federals had gone. And Ahab—Ahab who had shed his clothing and gone into the sea only to turn up the next day, as if nothing untoward had taken place—could anyone doubt but that he had swum out to Devil Reef? And could anyone doubt what had happened to the young Innsmouth man who had driven his car that night? For that was the way of sacrifice—the chosen of Ahab, to work for Ahab and be prepared, unknowing, for the sacrifice to those hellish creatures which rose from the depths of Y'ha-nthlei beyond the shunned and feared Devil Reef which in low tide stood black and evilly above the dark waters of the Atlantic.

For Ahab Marsh was back next day, back at the Refinery, with

another young man to drive his car around, and take him for those short distances from the immense old Marsh home on tree-shrouded Washington Street to the Refinery building near the falls of the Manuxet. But all night long from our room in the Gilman House we listened. It was not only the sounds from the sea, borne by the east wind, that we heard—there were other things beside that ghastly ululation. There were the terrible screams, the hoarse, animal-like screams of a man in mortal terror; there was that frightful chant which came simultaneously from the assembled members of the *Esoteric Order of Dagon*, gathered together in that Hall with its horrible sculptures and bas-reliefs and that grotesque and bestial miniature of a creature evil beyond the concept of man, that horrible mouthing which made its impact weirdly on the night air—*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn*—ever repeated, a ritual phrase which Phelan translated in his hushed voice as, "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming!"

In the morning my companion went out only long enough to assure himself that Ahab Marsh had returned; then he came back to the hotel and lost himself in study, leaving me to my own devices for the remainder of that day, and adjuring me only to refrain from making myself in any way conspicuous. I had already resolved to do nothing to attract attention, but nevertheless I was determined to follow up the hints of terrible human sacrifices and horrible rites performed by certain of the Innsmouth people, which Andrew Phelan had given me; and, accordingly, I made my way back to the First National store, and Mr. Hendreson.

The storekeeper did not recognize me, which was a tribute to Phelan's skill. He adopted toward me that same servile attitude which he had used to the Waite woman who had entered his store when I was last in it, and when we were alone—for someone else was in the store at my entrance—and I attempted to identify myself, it was almost impossible to do so. Plainly, Hendreson thought

at first that one of the Innsmouth people had somehow learned of our previous conversation, and it was only when I repeated to him many of the things he had said that he acknowledged me for whom I was. But he was fearful still.

"If *they* find out!" he exclaimed in a harsh, ominous whisper.

I assured him no one knew of my real identity and none would, save of course Hendreson, whom I felt certain could be trusted. He guessed that I had been "looking into things," as he put it, and with considerable agitation again urged me to take myself off.

"Some of them seem to be able to *smell* people who don't like them. I don't know how they do it—as if they read a man's mind or his heart. And if they catch you like this—why, why . . ."

"Why what, Mr. Hendreson?"

"You'll never get back where you came from."

I assured him with a self-confidence I was far from feeling that I had no intention of getting caught. I had come to him now for more information; despite the violent shaking of his head, I would not take his negative answer; perhaps he knew nothing, yet I must ask. Had there been any disappearances—particularly of young men and women—from Innsmouth in the years he had been here?

He nodded furtively.

"Many?"

"Maybe twenty or so. When the Order meets—they don't meet often; it usually comes out after that. On the nights the Order meets, somebody just isn't heard from again. *They* say they've run away. First few times I heard it, I didn't find that hard to believe; I could understand why they'd want to run away from Innsmouth." But then—there were those other things—the people who disappeared usually always worked for Ahab Marsh, and there were those old stories about Obed Marsh—how he carried people out to Devil Reef and came back alone. Zadok Allen had talked about it; *they* said Zadok was crazy, but Zadok said things, and

there was certain clinching evidence to support what the crazed old man said. He talked like that, and he had spells, Hendreson said, until he—*died*. By the way he said it, I gathered that Zadok Allen had not just died.

"You mean until they killed him," I countered.

"I didn't say so; I'm not the one to say anything. Mind you, I never *saw* a thing—anyway, nothing you could make something of. I never saw anyone disappear; I just didn't see them any more, that's all. Later on, I heard about it—somebody dropped a word about it here and there, and I picked it up. Nothing ever got into the paper; nothing ever was said so it could; no one ever made any search or any attempt to get trace of the missing ones. I couldn't help thinking about the stories old Zadok Allen and those others whispered about Captain Obed Marsh. Might be it's all in my mind. It would affect a man's mind to live in a place like this for as many years as I've been here; it would affect some men in just as many months. I'm not the one to say old Zadok Allen was crazy. All I say is that I don't think he was, and he never talked much until he had a little something to drink; that loosened his tongue, and usually next time he was sober he seemed to be mighty sorry he said anything, walking along and looking over his shoulder all the time even in broad daylight, and always a-looking out toward the sea, out to where you can just see the line of Devil Reef when the tide is low and the day is clear. The Inns-mouthers don't look out there much, but sometimes when there's a meeting at the Order of Dagon Hall, there are lights out there, strange lights, and there are lights from the cupola of the old Gilman House, just flashing back and forth—as if it was talk going on between 'em."

"You've seen those lights yourself?"

"It's the only thing I've seen. Might be a boat, but I don't think so. Not out there at Devil Reef."

"Have you ever been out there?"

He shook his head. "No, sir. Don't have any wish to go. I got close to it one time in a launch—ugly grey stone, with some mighty strange shapes to it—and I didn't want to get any closer. It was just like something driving you away, like a big hand reaching out invisible and pushing you back—that's the way it was. Made my skin crawl and my hair tingle along the back of my neck. I never forgot it—and that was before I heard much; so I never put it down to what was suggested or hinted at and something getting to work on my nerves or my imagination."

"Ahab Marsh is the power here in Innsmouth then?"

"That he is. That's because there's not a Waite or a Gilman or an Orne left, not a man, that is, just the women, and they're growing old. The men all vanished about the time the Federals came in here."

I turned him back to the subject of those mysterious disappearances. It seemed incredible that young men and women could simply drop out of existence in this day and age, and never a word of it printed anywhere. Oh, responded Hendreson, I didn't know Innsmouth if I thought that was impossible. They were close-mouthed, close as clams, and if they figured it was something they had to do for their pagan god or whatever it was they worshipped, they never complained, they just took it and made the best of it, and they were all mortally afraid of Ahab Marsh. He came close to me, so close that I was aware of his quickened pulse.

"I touched him once, just once, and that once was enough! God! He was cold, cold as ice, and where I touched him, between the end of his glove and his coat-sleeve—he drew back right away and gave me a look—the skin was moist-cold, like a fish!" He shuddered at the memory of it, touched a handkerchief to his temples, and broke away.

"Aren't they all like that?"

"No, they're not. The others are different. They say the Marshes

were all cold-blooded, especially since Captain Obed's time, but I've heard different. You take that fellow—Williamson, I think his name was—who brought the Federals here. They didn't know it at that time, but he was a Marsh—he had Orne blood in him, too, and when *they* found it out, they just waited for him to come back. And he did come. He came back, they said, and he went right down to the water, a-singing, they said, and he took off his clothes and he dove in and began swimming out toward that reef, and never a word of him since. Mind you, I didn't see it myself; it's just what I heard, though it took place in my own time. Those with Marsh blood in 'em always come back, no matter how far away they are. Look at Ahab Marsh—come from God knows where."

Once started, Hendreson proved to be unusually loquacious, despite his fears. Doubtless the long periods of abstinence in his conversation with outsiders had something to do with it, as well as the security his shop afforded him, for it was not often visited in the morning hours; the Innsmouth people preferred to shop in late afternoon, and he was often obliged to keep his store open beyond the usual six o'clock closing hour. He talked of the strange jewelry worn by the Innsmouthers—those grotesque and repulsive armlets and tiaras, the rings and pectorals, with repellent figures cut in high relief on them all. I could not doubt that they were the same as those figures of the bas-reliefs and sculptures in the Order of Dagon Hall; Hendreson has seen pieces on occasion; those who belonged to the Order wore them, and certain of the debased churches had them, too. He spoke about the sounds from the sea—"a kind of singing, and it's no human voice does it."

"What is it?"

"I don't know. No inclination to find out, either. It wouldn't be healthy. It comes from somewhere out there—like last night." His voice dropped to a whisper.

"I know what you mean."

He hinted at the other sounds; though he did not once mention the hoarse, terrified screams, he had nonetheless heard them. And there were other things, he muttered darkly, things far more terrible, things that went back to old Obed Marsh and still lived in the waters beyond Devil Reef. There was that suppressed talk about Obed himself—how he was not really dead, how a party of boating people from Newburyport way who knew the Marsh family came into port one day all pale and shaking and said they had seen Obed out there, swimming like a porpoise, and if it was not Obed Marsh, then what was it in his likeness? What was it the Newburyporters had seen? No plain fish would scare men and women like that! And why did the Innsmouthers try so hard to keep it quiet? They shut up the Newburyport people, all right—probably because they were strangers and they didn't really want to believe what it was they saw out there near Devil Reef. But there *were* things swimming out there, others had seen them, things that dove and disappeared and never came up again, though they looked like men and women, except that they were sometimes scaly and with odd, wrinkled, and shiny skin. And what happened to so many of the old folks? There never seemed to be funerals, nor burials—but certain of them got queerer-looking every year, and then one fine day went down to the sea and first thing people knew they were reported "lost at sea" or "drowned" or something like that. It was true, the things swimming in the sea were not often seen by day—but at night! And what was it, what manner of creature was it that came climbing out of the sea on to Devil Reef? And why did certain of the Innsmouthers go out there in the night? He seemed to grow more and more excited as he talked, though his voice grew more hushed, and it was readily patent that he had brooded a great deal about everything he had heard since he came to Innsmouth, and was held to

it by a fascination over which he had no control, a fascination which existed side by side with an utter and almost morbid loathing.

It was almost noon when I made my way back to the Gilman House.

My companion had finished his study, and he now listened to what I had to say with the utmost gravity, though I could detect nothing in his attitude to reveal that he had not previously been aware of what Hendreson had said and hinted. After I finished, he said nothing, only nodded, and went on to explain our coming movements. Our period of stay in Innsmouth was almost over, he said; we would leave the city just as soon as we had dealt with Ahab Marsh, and that might be tonight, it might be tomorrow night, but it would be soon, for all was in readiness. Meanwhile, however, there were certain aspects of this strange pursuit of which I must know, and chief among them was the danger to myself.

"I am not afraid," I hastened to say.

"No, perhaps not in the physical sense. But it is impossible to say what they might do to you. All of us carry a talisman which is potent against the Deep Ones and the minions of the Old Ones, but not against the Old Ones themselves, or their immediate servitors, who also come to the surface of earth on special missions to destroy such of us as learn the secrets and oppose the coming again of great Cthulhu, and those others."

So saying, he placed before me a small, five-pointed star made of a stone material foreign to me. A grey stone—and instantly I remembered reading of it in the Library at Miskatonic University—"the five-pointed star carven of grey stone from ancient Mnar!" which had the power of the Elder Ones in its magic. I took it wordlessly and put it into my pocket, as Phelan indicated I should.

He went on.

This might afford me partial terrestrial protection, but there was a way of further escape if danger from the immediate servitors of Cthulhu menaced. I, too, might come to Celaeno, if I wished, though the way was terrible, and it would be required of me that I enlist the aid of creatures who, while in opposition to the Deep Ones and all others who served Great Cthulhu, were themselves essentially evil, for they served Hastur the Unspeakable, laired in the black Lake of Hali in the Hyades. In order that these creatures be made to serve me, however, it would be necessary for me to swallow a small pellet, a distillation of that marvelous golden mead of Professor Shrewsbury's, the mead which rendered the drinker insensible to the effects of time and space, and enabled him to travel in those dimensions, while at the same time heightening his sensory perceptions; then to blow upon a strange stone whistle, and also to call forth into space certain words: "*Iä! Iä! Hastur, Hastur, cf'syak 'vulgtmm, vugilagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!*" Certain flying creatures—the Byakhee—would come out of space, and I was to mount and take flight unafraid. But only if danger pressed close—for the danger of the Deep Ones and all who are allied to them, insisted Phelan, is as great to the soul as to the body.

To all this I listen in amazement not untouched by a kind of spiritual terror—that terror so common to men who, for the first time look out into the void of greater space, who begin to contemplate seriously for the initial time the vastness of the outer universes—a terror induced by the instinctive knowledge that it was by this means of travel that Andrew Phelan had reached my room in Boston, and it was by this means that he had originally gone forth more than a year ago!

So saying, Phelan gave into my hands the little golden pellets, three of them, in case I should lose one, and also a tiny whistle, which he warned me never to blow upon save in the dire need he

had outlined, unless I were prepared for fateful consequences. This much, he said, he could do for my protection, and he made it plain that we would not be returning to Arkham together, though we might set out for that town in each other's company.

"They will expect us to go back to Newburyport," he said. "So we will follow the railroad tracks toward Arkham. That is shorter, in any case, and by the time they may be ready to pursue, we should be well out of their way. Immediately our work is done, we will make for the railroad; we will wait long enough to be sure that our work here is accomplished." He paused significantly and then added that pursuit from Innsmouth by the people themselves we need not fear.

"What other then?"

"When that other comes, you will know without prior explanation," he answered ominously.

By nightfall, we were prepared. I did not as yet fully know Andrew Phelan's plan, but I knew that the first step necessary would be to empty the Washington Street house of the Marshes of the two women who were there. To this end Phelan sent them a prosaic note saying that an elderly relative had arrived to put up at the Gilman House, and, being in ill health and unable to call, would enjoy a visit that evening at nine o'clock from the Misses Aliza and Ethlai Marsh. It was a commonplace letter, correct in every detail, save that my companion embellished it with a reproduction of that seal of Dagon, and again impressed the seal in wax upon the flap of the envelope. He had signed the name of Wilken, knowing that there had years ago been marriage between the Marshes and the Wilkens, and he felt certain that this letter would take the Marsh women from the house for the length of time required for what must be done to destroy the leadership of the minions of Cthulhu at Innsmouth and so retard whatever progress

had been made in preparing the way for the rising again, the coming from his house of that dread being dreaming deep in the waters under the earth.

He dispatched this letter near supper-time, and instructed the desk clerk that if anyone should telephone, he would be back directly. Then we went out, Phelan carrying a little valise into which he had put some of the things he had brought with him in the pockets of that robe he had worn on his arrival.

The sky was overcast, which my companion was pleased to see, for at nine there would otherwise still have been some twilight; now, however, at that hour, the night would be dark enough for our purpose. If all went as he hoped, the Marsh women would travel to the Gilman House by car, driven by the new man; that would leave Ahab alone in that old mansion. Phelan explained that he had no qualms; if the women did not respond to that message, they too must be destroyed, much as he disliked the thought of proceeding against them in the same fashion as against Ahab. We had no difficulty in finding a place of adequate concealment from which we could watch the Washington Street house, for the street was heavily grown with trees, thus affording shadows and dark corners. The house across the way was shrouded in darkness, save for a tiny light that gleamed in a room on the second floor, but just before nine o'clock, a light went up downstairs.

"They're coming," whispered my companion.

He was right, for in a few moments that black, curtained car rolled around to the front entrance, and the two Marsh women, heavily veiled, came from the house and, entering the car, drove away.

Phelan lost not an instant. He crossed the street into the dark grounds of the Marsh estate, and there at once opened his valise, which contained scores of the five-pointed stars, all very small. These, he said, were to be used to circle the house, particularly in the vicinity of the doors and windows; we must work silently and

swiftly, for if these talismans were not laid down, Ahab might escape. But he could not cross these stones, he could not pass by them in any way. I hastened to do Phelan's bidding, and soon met him coming around the other way. The darkness was urgent with foreboding; at any moment the Marsh women might come back; at any second Ahab Marsh might become aware of someone in the grounds, though we made no sound.

"It will soon be over," said Phelan then. "Whatever happens, be still—do not be alarmed."

He then disappeared once more around to the back of the house. He was gone but a few minutes before he returned to where I stood in the shadow of a bush near the front entrance. But he did not pause; he went on up to the front door and there busied himself for a few moments. When he stepped away, I saw a thin flame growing at one corner of the door—he had fired the house!

He joined me, looking grimly and emotionlessly toward that single window where light burned. "Only fire will destroy them," he said. "You might remember that, Abel. You may encounter them again."

"We'd better get away."

"Wait. We must make sure of Ahab."

The fire ate rapidly at the old wood, and already at the rear of the house the flames lit up the close-pressing trees. At any moment someone might see, someone might give the alarm which would summon the rickety old Innsmouth fire department vehicles; but in this we were fortunate, for the Innsmouthers generally shunned the places where Ahab Marsh lived and worked, fearing and respecting the Marshes, even as their ancestors had feared and respected those earlier members of that accursed family who had trafficked with beings out of the sea and so had brought into this seaport town a blight of horrible miscegenation which had left its mark upon all their progeny.

Suddenly the window of that lit room was thrown open, and

Ahab leaned out. He was there for but an instant; then he withdrew, not troubling to shut the window, and thus creating an effective draft for the flames from below.

"Now!" whispered Andrew Phelan urgently.

The front door was torn open, and Ahab Marsh bounded out past the flames in one great leap. But he went no farther; he came down, took one step, and then recoiled, his arms upflung, and a horrible, guttural cry welled from his thick lips. Behind him the flames mounted and spread, aided by the draft through the open door; already the heat must have been awful where he stood—for what happened then is seared upon my consciousness for all time.

The clothes worn by Ahab Marsh began to fall from him in flames as he stood there—first those curious mittens on his hands, then the black skull-cap, and the clothes about his body—and this so swiftly that he seemed literally to burst from his clothes! What stood there then was not human, it was not a man, it was a hellish batrachian and ichthyic travesty of a man, whose hands were frog-like and webbed, great pads instead of hands, whose body was scaled and tentacled and gleamed with the moisture so natural to its coldness—a body which had been bound into the unnatural clothing of a human being, but which, now that that clothing had fallen away, and the tight linens binding it to fit into that clothing as well, resembled a thing out of an unknown, dark corner of earth's forbidden places—a terrible, ghastly thing that walked in the guise of a man, but had gills beneath the wax ears which melted off in the heat of that destructive fire where that creature slowly backed into the flames, rather than dare the power of those stones laid end to end around the house, whimpering and crying bestially, in a kind of ululation I had heard before!

Small wonder Ahab Marsh had been able to swim from shore out to Devil Reef! Small wonder he had carried sacrifices to the waiting hosts out there in the depths! For the creature in the

guise and identity of Ahab Marsh was not a Marsh at all, he was not a human being; *the thing that called itself Abab Marsh, the thing the Innsmouth people so blindly followed was one of the Deep Ones itself, come from the sunken city of Y'ha-nthlei to resume again the work once begun by the terrible Obed Marsh at the behest and bidding of the minions of Great Cthulhu!*

As in a dream I felt Andrew Phelan's touch upon my arm; I turned and followed him into the shadowed street, down which even now came that curtained car carrying the Marsh women back to that unhallowed house. We fled, skulking in the shadows. There was no need to return to the Gilman House, for we had left money in our room to pay for our lodgings, and nothing of importance in personal belongings had been left there. We went directly toward the railroad tracks and made our way out of that justly shunned city.

A mile beyond the town we turned and looked back. The redness of the sky in that place told us what was happening; the fire in that ancient tinder house had spread to neighboring houses. But something of even more portentous significance took place, for silently my companion pointed seaward, and there, far out on the rim of the sky, I saw strange, green flashes of light and, looking swiftly back toward Innsmouth, I saw other lights flashing from a high place which could have been none other than the cupola of the Gilman House.

Then Andrew Phelan took my hand. "Goodbye, Abel. I am going to leave you here. You will remember everything I have said."

"But they will find you!" I cried.

He shook his head. "Do you go on along the tracks; lose no time. I'll be all right."

I did as I was bidden, knowing that every moment's delay was potentially fatal.

I could not have gone far when I heard that strange, unearthly

whistling sound, and shortly thereafter the voice of Andrew Phelan shouting triumphantly into space—"Iä! Iä! Hastur! Hastur cf'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!"

Involuntarily I turned.

There, silhouetted against the red-hued sky over Innsmouth, I saw a great flying thing, a great bat-like bird that came sweeping down and was lost briefly in the darkness—the Byakhee! Then it rose up again, and it was not alone—something more was there between its great wings where it mounted swiftly out of sight.

Daring danger, I ran back.

Of Andrew Phelan there was no sign.

5.

It is now almost a fortnight since the events of that week.

The divinity school has known me no more; I have been haunting the Library of Miskatonic University, and I have learned more—much more—about things Andrew Phelan would not tell me, and I understand better now what it was that went on in accursed Innsmouth, things that are going on in other remote corners of this earth, which is always and forever a great battleground for the forces of good and those of evil.

Two nights ago for the first time I saw that I was being followed. Perhaps I was wrong in tearing from my face all those disfiguring things Andrew Phelan had put there to give me "the Innsmouth look," and leaving them lie along the little-used tracks in the direction of Arkham, where they might be found. Perhaps it was not the Innsmouth people who found them—but something other, something that came out of the sea that night in response to those signals from the cupola of the Gilman House. Yet my follower of two nights ago was an Innsmouth man, surely; his oddly

atrachian appearance was unmistakable. Of him, however, I had no fear; I had the five-pointed star-stone in my pocket; I felt safe.

But last night came the other!

Last night I heard the earth move under me! I heard the sound of great, sluggish, sucking footsteps slogging along in the waters of the earth, and I knew what Andrew Phelan meant when he said that I would know when that other pursuer came! I know!

I have made haste to put this down, and I will send it to the library at Miskatonic University, to be put with Dr. Shrewsbury's papers and what they call the "Phelan Manuscript," written by Andrew Phelan before he went to Celaeno for the first time. It is true, and I have the conviction that I am not alone; there is an unnatural hush about the entire city, and I can hear those horrible sucking sounds from far beneath. In the east, the Pleiades and Celaeno have begun to rise above the horizon. I have taken the little golden pellet made from Dr. Shrewsbury's mead, I have the whistle here beside me, I remember the words, and if the heightening of awareness that is certain to follow the taking of the mead discloses something of what it is that dogs me now, I shall know what to do.

Even now I am becoming aware of changes within me. It is as if the walls of the house fell away, as if the street too, were gone, and a fog—something in that watery fog, like a giant frog with tentacles—like a—

Great God! What horror!

Iä! Iä! Hastur! . . .

III.

THE GORGE BEYOND SALAPUNCO

being

The Testament of Claiborne Boyd

(The manuscript of Claiborne Boyd, now in the vaults of the Library of the University of Buenos Aires, is in three parts. The first two parts were discovered among the effects of Claiborne Boyd left behind in a hotel room in Lima, Peru; the final portion is a piecing together of various letters—delivered to Professor Vibarro Andros of Lima—and of related accounts. The entire manuscript has been released for limited publication only after prolonged discussion among its custodians.)

1.

IT IS SINGULARLY fortunate that the ability of the human mind to correlate and assimilate facts is limited in relation to the potential knowledge of the universe even as we know it—to say nothing of what lies beyond. Fortunate because the earth's teeming millions, save but for an infinitesimal number, live on blissfully unaware of the dark depths of horror which yawn eternally not only in strange, out-of-the-way places of the earth, but often just beyond the sunset or around the next corner—the yawning chasms in time and space, and the inconceivably alien things which occupy those terrible lacunae.

Less than a year ago I was engaged upon a leisurely study of Creole culture, residing in New Orleans and making occasional trips from that city into the bayou country of the Mississippi Delta region, which was not far from the town of my birth. I had been following this pursuit for perhaps three months when word reached me of the death of my great-uncle Asaph Gilman, and of

the shipment—at his express direction as contained in his will—of certain of his property to me, as “the only student” remaining among his few living relatives.

My great-uncle had been for many years Professor of Nuclear Physics at Harvard, and, following his retirement because of age from that University, he had taught briefly at Miskatonic University in Arkham. From this last post he retired to his home in a suburb of Boston and began to live out his last years in an almost reclusive fashion; I write “almost,” because he broke his seclusion from time to time to make strange, secretive trips into all corners of the world, on one of which—while poking about certain unsavory districts of Limehouse, in London—he had met his death—a sudden riot of what appeared to be lascars or dacoits from ships in dock involving him and dissipating as suddenly as it had begun, leaving him dead.

I had had occasional communications from him, written in a spidery hand and dispatched from various points at which he had touched—from Nome, Alaska, for instance, and Ponape in the Carolines, from Singapore, Cairo, Cregoivacar in Transylvania, Vienna, and many more places. At the beginning of my research into Creole backgrounds, I had received a cryptic postcard sent from Paris, bearing on its face a fine etching of the Bibliotheque Nationale, and on the reverse a directive from Great-Uncle Asaph: “If you come upon any evidence of pagan worship *past or present*, in your study, I would be obliged if you would collect all data and send it along to me at your earliest convenience.” Since, of course, the Creoles among whom I studied were largely Roman Catholic in religion, I encountered no such data as he sought; so I did not write to the address in London he gave. Indeed, before I had planned to write to him at all, word of his untimely death reached me.

My great-uncle’s effects followed notice of his death a fortnight

later—two steamer-trunks filled to capacity, if their weight were any indication. At the time of their arrival I was busy assimilating primary facts about customs and folklore of the Creole country, and for that reason it was well over a month before I thought to open the trunks and make at least a cursory examination of their contents. When I did finally open them, I discovered that their contents could be divided readily into two parts—a collection of extremely curious “pieces” which would have been the delight of any collector of aboriginal art, and a sheaf of notes, some typewritten, some in my great-uncle’s spidery script, some merely clippings and letters.

Obviously because the aboriginal art lent itself most readily to scrutiny, I gave some time to it immediately. After perhaps four hours spent in an effort at some arrangement, I came to the conclusion that the pieces my great-uncle had so painstakingly collected represented a strange kind of creative progression. My own knowledge of such aboriginal art was comparatively limited, but my great-uncle had attached adequate notes to the bottoms or backs of most of the pieces, save the patently self-explanatory ones, such as the common types of Polynesian masks, for instance.

The division of the pieces into groups was in itself interesting. There were approximately two hundred and seventy-seven of them, making allowance for two or three which might have broken in such a way as to resemble two pieces rather than one. Of this number, probably a quarter of a hundred were of American Indian origin, and a like number of Canadian Indian and Eskimo origin. There were a few scattered pieces which were clearly of Mayan design, and there were a score of Egyptian craftsmanship. Approximately a hundred pieces came out of the African heartland, and two score or so from Oriental sources. Almost all the remainder—and therefore the majority from any one source—were South Pacific in origin, from Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia,

and Australia. Apart from these, there were perhaps half a dozen pieces, the origin of which was admittedly unknown. These pieces were all extremely unusual, and, though differing widely in a superficial fashion from one another, there seemed to be connecting links between them, as if some obscure development had occurred in common in all the racial and culture patterns represented, such links as suggested certain basic similarities between the hideous carvings of the South Pacific and the repellent totems of the Canadian Indians, for instance; and of this odd relationship, my great-uncle had certainly been aware, as his notes indicated. But, disappointingly, there was nowhere any clear indication of the underlying thesis of my great-uncle's research insofar as these curious art works were concerned.

My great-uncle had clearly lavished most of his care upon the South Pacific pieces, which were not, I saw at a glance, the customary mask-varieties, though his notes were not in themselves too expository, and it was only in the light of later events that some clarification of the "art" and of his appended notes occurred to me. Among the South Pacific pieces were several which caught my eye at once. In the order of their impingement upon my awareness, they were as follows, with appended notes:

1) A human figure surmounted by a bird. "Sepik River, New Guinea. Reverse said to exist, but great secrecy attending. Uncollected."

2) A piece of Tapa cloth from the Tonga Islands, the design a dark green star upon a brown background. "First occurrence of the five-pointed star in this area. No other relation. Natives unable to account for design; say it is very old. Evidently no contact here, since it has lost meaning."

3) Fisherman's God. "Cook Islands. *Not* the familiar fishing canoe effigy. Note lack of neck, misshapen torso, tentacles for legs

and/or arms. No name given by natives."

4) Stone *tiki*. "Marquesas. Exciting *batrachian* head of figure presumably man. Are fingers webbed? Natives, while not worshipping it, endow it with meaning, apparently fear association."

5) Diminutive head. "Clearly a miniature of colossal stone images found on the outer slope of Rano-raraku. Typical Easter Island work. Found in Ponape. Natives call it simply 'Elder God'."

6) Carved lintel. "New Zealand Maori. Exquisite workmanship. Central figures obviously octopoid, yet not an octopus, but a curious combination of fish, frog, octopus, and man."

7) Carved door jamb (*talé*). "New Caledonia. Note suggestion of five-pointed star *again!*"

8) Ancestral figure. "Carved in tree fern. Ambrym, New Hebrides. Partly human, partly *batrachian*. If representation of true ancestor, some manifest relation to same cult as that of Ponape and Innsmouth. Mention of Cthulhu to owner frightened him; he seemed not to know why."

9) Bearded mask. "Ambrym origin. Exciting suggestion of *tentacles*, *not hair*, as 'beard.' Similar use in Carolines, Sepik River country of New Guinea, and Marquesas. One such in shop in dock area of Singapore. *Not for sale!*"

10) Wooden figure. "Sepik River. Notice a) nose—a single tentacle curling down and into figure below waist; b) lower jaw—another tentacle curling down, rejoining torso at umbilicus. Head grotesquely out of proportion. Living model?"

11) War-shield. "Queensland. Maze design. Apparently a) maze under water; b) squat, anthropoid figure suggested at end of maze. Tentacles?"

12) Shell pendant. "Papua. Similar to above."

It seemed manifest that my great-uncle sought some very definite tendencies in these pieces, but whether of the development of

primitive art or of some object of representation was not clear. Presumably, however, it was the latter, for among the remaining pieces of unknown origin there were two which were extremely suggestive in the light of my great-uncle's cryptic notes. One was of a rough, five-pointed star, made from some manner of grey stone unfamiliar to me; the other was an exquisitely made figure just over seven inches in height, representing nothing so much as the figment of a nightmare. It represented, certainly, some ancient monster, or, rather, an aboriginal concept of an ancient monster, doubtless long extinct if anything even remotely resembling it had ever walked the earth. The creature was suggestively anthropoid in outline, but its head was octopoid, and its face was a mass of feelers resembling tentacles, while its body appeared to be at one and the same time scaly and rubbery-looking. Its hind and fore feet had disproportionately large claws, and something which resembled bat-wings appeared to grow from its back. Because it was corpulent, and its face of a horrible malignance, the squatting figure had about it an unavoidable force—a vivid, unforgettable impression of great evil,—not evil as it is commonly understood, but a terrible, soul-destroying horror transcending evil as mere men can know it. Its aspect was perhaps all the more fearful because the cephalopod head was bent forward, and the aspect of the squatting figure was that of a creature about to rise, as it were, to pounce forward. To its base, my great-uncle had pasted but one brief note, more puzzling than the others. It read only, "C.?—or some other?" Though my knowledge of such primitive art was, as I have admitted, comparatively slight, I was convinced that there was no link between the art of this strange figure and the known types of art with which I had the familiarity of any reasonably well-educated individual, and this conviction served to make my great-uncle's acquisition seem all the more mysterious.

There was likewise no clue to its origin—at least, as far as the

figure itself was concerned. I sought this in vain, but nothing appeared save only my great-uncle's strange question. Moreover, there was about this figure the feeling and the look of vast, incalculable age; this was unmistakable, for the material out of which it had been fashioned was a greenish-black stone with iridescent flecks and striations which suggested nothing geologically familiar to me. Furthermore, there were presently apparent, along the base of the figure, certain characters which I had initially mistaken for carving marks; yet it seemed clear after prolonged examination that these characters were not the haphazard, slipshod scars of any carving tool, but rather carefully cut into the stone; they were, in fact, hieroglyphs or characters of some language which bore no more resemblance to known linguistics than the carving itself did to the known types of art.

Small wonder, perhaps, that I was soon persuaded to set aside my paper on the Creole culture and background in favor of some more extensive research into my great-uncle's papers. It seemed quite patent to me that, however secretive he might have been, he was on the track of something, and there were certain factors—notably his card inquiring about "pagan worship" among the Creoles, and his interest in the aboriginal pieces he had preserved—which tended to show that the object of his quest was very probably some form of ancient religion which he was attempting to trace back through the centuries in the remote corners of the world where its survival was far more likely than in the metropolitan centers of our own time.

My resolve, however, was far more easily made than carried out, for my great-uncle's papers were in nothing at all resembling order or chronology. I had hoped, because of the comparative neatness of their piles in the trunks, that they were in at least reading order, but it took me a considerable time to effect any sort of even primary arrangement, and an even longer time to estab-

lish a sequence of a sort—though there was no assurance that that sequence was correct. Nevertheless, there was some reason to believe that if it were not, at least I could not be very far off, for my great-uncle's travel notes permitted of some dating, since it was possible to discover where he had traveled and what the order of his travels was. It was also possible to hit upon the original impetus of his travels, so unlikely a way for him to pass his last years, judging by his middle and earlier life.

It seemed quite probable that some experience, real or assimilated, associated with the two years during which he taught at Miskatonic University had set him off. But the immediate direction of his first travels apparently lay in a curious manuscript, which was evidently that of a castaway; how it had come into my great-uncle's possession I had no way of knowing, though it was probable that the short newspaper clipping attached to the manuscript might have put him on its trail. The clipping was but a brief account of the finding of a manuscript in a bottle; it was headed: **LOST SHIP MYSTERY SOLVED. H.M.S. ADVOCATE SANK AT SEA!** and read:

"Auckland, N. Z.: December 17—The mystery of *H.M.S. Advocate*, lost last August, appeared to be solved today with the discovery of a manuscript written by First Mate Alistair Greenbie. The manuscript was discovered in a bottle floating not far from the coast of New Zealand by a fishing crew. While it appeared to be in large part the raving of a mind already disordered by long exposure, the essential facts of the *Advocate's* foundering seem clear. After clearing Singapore, the ship was caught in the storm which swept down from the Kuriles in mid-August; it was at that time in S. Latitude 47° 53', W. Longitude 127° 37'. The crew of the *Advocate* was forced to abandon ship ten hours after the storm struck, and while the storm was still raging. Thereafter, they were at the mercy of high seas, and, if Greenbie's account can be be-

lieved, of incredibly brutal pirates whose action decimated the men who remained alive as the boat bearing Greenbie and his companions drove for the shore of an island which was presumably one of the Gilbert or Marianas Islands. Such an island as that described by Greenbie, however, is not known to local navigators, who are inclined to cast doubt upon Greenbie's account following the forced leave-taking of the ship."

The manuscript itself was written on the relatively small sheets of a pocket notebook and was pinned together. Though thick in pages, it was written in a shaky hand, and there were not many words on the page. Nevertheless, it was of substantial length, considering that its writer was very probably suffering from exposure and more or less convinced that he was doomed to die at sea.

"I am all that is left of the crew of *H.M.S. Advocate*, which set out from Singapore August 17th, this year. On the 21st we ran into a storm, S. Latitude 47° 53', W. Longitude 127° 37', coming out of the north and blowing something terrible. Captain Randall ordered all hands to and we did our best, but could not stand up against the storm in a craft no more seaworthy than the *Advocate*. At the beginning of the sixth watch, ten hours after the storm hit us, the order came to abandon ship; she was settling fast; something had torn her on the port side; and it was no good trying to save her. We got off in two boats. Captain Randall was in charge of the one, which was the last off, and I was in charge of the other. Five men were lost getting away from the ship; the water was running higher than I ever saw it, and when the *Advocate* went down it was all the worse.

"We were separated in the dark, but we got together again next day. We had enough provisions to last a week, if we took care, and we figured we were somewhere between the Carolines and the Admiralties, closer to the latter and New Guinea; so we did what we could against the high seas to go in that direction. On

the second day out, Blake got hysterical and caused an unfortunate accident; in the fight, the compass was lost. Since it was the only compass between the two boats, its loss was a serious matter. Nevertheless, we maintained, we thought, a course straight for the Admiralties or New Guinea, whichever showed up first, but after nightfall the first night we saw by the stars that we were off course by west. On the next night we were still off course, more so, if anything, but we could not be sure of our direction even after we had rectified the course, because clouds came up and covered the stars, all but the Southern Cross and Canopus, which would be seen just dimly behind the clouds for some time after the rest of them were down behind.

"We lost four more men in those days. Siddons, Harker, Peterson, and Wiles went out of their heads. Then, during the fourth night, Hewett, who was on watch, woke us all up with a loud yell; and, when we were awake, we heard what he had heard—yelling and crying—it sounded horrible—coming over the water from where we judged Captain Randall's boat was; but in a few minutes it was all over. We tried to hail them, but we could get no answer; if it had been one of the men going berserk, we would have heard. But there was nothing. After a while we didn't try any more, just waited for morning, all of us more or less afraid in the darkness, with those terrible cries still ringing in our ears.

"Then the morning came, and we looked for the other boat. We saw it, all right, but there wasn't a man to be seen aboard her. I ordered the boat to make for her, thinking perhaps there still were men lying down in her, but when we came up alongside, there was nothing, not a sign of anybody, except that the Captain's cap was still lying there. I looked the boat over carefully. The only thing I noticed was that the gunwales looked *slimy*, from the outside in, just as if something had pushed up out of the water and trailed into the boat. I couldn't make anything out of that.

"We cut away from the boat, leaving her just as we found her. We were not strong enough to warrant pulling the extra weight, and there was nothing to be gained by it. We didn't know which direction we were going now, didn't know just where we were, but we still believed we were near the Admiralties. About four hours after sun-up, Adams gave a shout and pointed straight ahead, and there was land! We pulled for it, but it was farther off than we thought. It wasn't until late afternoon that we got close enough to see it fair.

"It was an island, but it wasn't like any I ever saw before. It was about a mile long, and, though it did not appear to have any vegetation on it, it seemed to have some kind of building in the middle of it; a big, black stone pillar stuck up there, and down at the water's edge there seemed to be pieces of masonry. Jacobson had the glass, and I took it from him. Clouds were up and the sun was near to setting, but I could still see. The island didn't look right. It looked like mud, even the high ground. The building looked wrong, too. I thought the heat and the shortage of water was getting me, but just the same I said we wouldn't make for shore till next day.

"We never made for shore.

"That night it was Richardson's watch up to midnight, but he was too weak to take it; so Petrie took it and Simonds sat with him, in case one should fall asleep. We were all dog tired, having tried too hard to reach that land and overdoing it on the short rations we had, and we were all soon asleep. It seemed that we hadn't been asleep long when a yell from Simonds woke us. I was up quick as a cat and at his side.

"He was sitting there staring—his eyes wide and his mouth open—like a man in the extremity of fear. He babbled that Petrie was gone; that something had come up out of the water and just took him off the boat. That was all he had time for; that was all

any of us had time for. The next minute they were all over us, coming up out of the water like devils, swarming up on all sides!

"The men fought like mad. I felt something tearing at me—like a scaly arm with a hand at the end of it, but *I swear to God that hand had webbed fingers! And I swear that the face I saw was like a cross between a frog and a man! And the thing had gills, and was slimy to the touch!*

"That is the last I remember of that night. Next thing something hit me; I think it was poor, fear-crazed Jed Lambert, and he probably thought he was hitting out at one of the things boarding us. I went down and I stayed down and that is probably what saved me; the things left me for dead.

"When I came to, it was day by some hours. That island was gone—I was far out, away from it. I drifted all that day, and night after, and this morning I put this down so that if I don't reach land, or if I am not sighted soon, I can put it into the bottle and hope and pray someone may find it and come back and get those things that took my men and Captain Randall and his men—for there is no doubt that is what happened to them, too—pulled out of their boat in the night by something from the lurking hells beneath these cursed waters.

"Signed, Alistair H. Greenbie
First Mate, H.M.S. ADVOCATE."

Whatever the authorities in Auckland thought of Greenbie's statement, it is certain that my great-uncle viewed it with the utmost gravity, for, following in chronological sequence, there was a very large assortment of similar stories—accounts of strange, inexplicable happenings, narratives of unsolved mysteries, of curious disappearances, of all manner of outré occurrences which might be printed in thousands of newspapers and read with but the most superficial interest by the vast majority of people.

For the most part, these accounts were short; it seemed evident that the majority of the editors themselves utilized them only as "filler" material, and it doubtless occurred to my great-uncle that if the Greenbie statement could have been treated so cavalierly, then other items might have similar stories behind them. Now it should be made clear that the clippings so carefully gathered by my great-uncle were similar in only one particular—and that is their utter strangeness. Apart from this, there was no apparent similarity among them at all. The several long accounts among them were of matters which were of some local concern; these were as follows—

1) A comprehensive resume of the facts concerning the disappearance of Dr. Laban Shrewsbury of Arkham, Massachusetts, to which were appended various obscure paragraphs copied from a manuscript or book by the vanished man, entitled *An Investigation into the Myth-Patterns of Latter-day Primitives with Especial Reference to the R'lyeh Text*. For instance: "The sea origin would seem incontrovertible, for every narrative of Cthulhu is related in some way, directly or indirectly, to the oceans; this is true whether it is of some manifestation supposedly stemming from Cthulhu, or whether an account of actions of his followers. One is not too certain of the validity of the Atlantis legend; yet there are certain apparent superficial similarities one ought not to dismiss without investigation. The focal points of the activities, arrived at by simply establishing concentric circles throughout various maps of the globe, would seem to be eight in number—1) the South Pacific, with the center of the circle being at or near Ponape in the Carolines; 2) the Atlantic off the U. S. coast, with the center just off Innsmouth, Massachusetts; 3) the subterranean waters under Peru, centering about the ancient citadel of the Incas, Machu Picchu; 4) the North African country and the Mediterranean, with the center being in the vicinity of the Saharan Oasis of El

Nigro; 5) North Canada and Alaska, centering north of Medicine Hat; 6) the Atlantic, centering in the Azores; 7) the southern half of the United States embracing the islands, centering somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico; and 8) Southwest Asia, the focal point a desert area in the Kuwait country (?) said to be near an ancient buried city (Irem, the City of Pillars?).”

2) An extensive inquiry, with notes, however disjointed, of the mysterious invasion and partial destruction of Innsmouth by Federal agents.

3) A weekly newspaper account of the disappearance of Henry W. Akeley from his hill country home near Brattleboro, with some mention of the horribly perfect representations of Akeley's face and hands found in the chair from which he had vanished, and some less prominent mention of terrible footprints glimpsed in the earth around the house.

4) A translation of a lengthy letter which had appeared in a Cairo paper concerning manifestations of strange sea beasts half-seen in the waters off the Moroccan coast.

There were many of the shorter clippings, but all, like the long ones, concerned matters of almost bizarre strangeness, or with the suggestion of amazing mystery. There were accounts of strange storms, inexplicable earth tremors, police raids on cult gatherings, unsolved crimes of every description, unusual natural phenomena, narratives of travelers in out-of-the-way corners of the earth, and hundreds of similar matters.

In addition to these clippings there were various books—studies of the Inca civilization, two books on Easter Island, and baffling passages from books bearing titles of which I had never previously heard—the *Celaeno Fragments*, the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*, the *R'lyeh Text*, the *Book of Eibon*, the *Sussex Manuscript*, and the like.

Finally, then, there were my great-uncle's jottings.

These were, unfortunately, almost as cryptic as some of the accounts he had so carefully hoarded, but it was nevertheless possible to arrive at certain conclusions regarding them. There was nowhere any concise summary of his findings, but there was manifest a certain progression which led to unalterable conclusions. From the tenor of his jottings, it was easy enough to gather: 1) that my great-uncle was on the track of a loosely banded organization which worshipped one of a number of allied beings, the one specific object of my great-uncle's search being the central headquarters of the cult of Cthulhu (occasionally spelled Kthulhu, Clooloo, etc.) and that some or all of the remaining art objects were related to the cult worship; 2) that the worship of this being was very ancient and very evil; 3) that my great-uncle suspected that the curiously repellent stone image of unknown origin was an aboriginal artist's concept of the being, Cthulhu; 4) that my great-uncle more than suspected a relationship between the untoward events of the clippings he had collected, and the worship of this or allied beings. In this connection, his jottings are of singularly marked suggestiveness, as the following indicate:

"Certain parallels present themselves with damning and inescapable deductions to be drawn. For instance, Dr. Shrewsbury vanished within a year of the publication of his book on myth-patterns. The British scholar, Sir Landon Etrick, was killed in a strange accident six weeks after he permitted publication in the *Occult Review* his paper inquiring into the 'Fish-Men' of Ponape. The American writer, H. P. Lovecraft, died within a year of publication of his curious 'fiction,' *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. Of these and others only Lovecraft's death seems devoid of odd accident. NB: Some inquiry into H. P. L.'s allergy to cold is indicated. Also note a pronounced aversion to the sea and all things pertaining to it, carried so far as to inspire physical illness at sight of sea food.

"The conclusion is unavoidable that Shrewsbury and Lovecraft, too—and perhaps Etrick and others, as well—were close upon the track of some momentous discoveries concerning C."

"Note the curious significance of the oasis name: *El Nigro*. Roughly translated, this would be 'The Dark One,' which in turn would signify not alone the 'devil' but any creature of darkness. NB: No account available suggesting that either C. or those directly serving him have come forth save by darkness, except for the Johansen narrative recorded by Lovecraft. Only his minions by day. Compare with the Greenbie paper! Can there be any doubt but that the islands seen by Johansen and Greenbie are one and the same? I think not. But where, then, is it? No record out of Ponape. None out of Queensland. No mapped record of any kind. The Johansen account and that of Greenbie agree that it must lie between New Guinea and the Carolines, possibly west of the Admiralties. Johansen hints that the island is *not* fixed, but sinks and rises. (If so, what is the explanation of the 'buildings?')"

"Everywhere evidence, direct or hinted, of ichthyic or batrachian 'men'—particularly in connection with certain events. Seen in Arkham prior to the disappearance of Dr. Shrewsbury. Glimpsed in London just after the death of Etrick. Greenbie mentions beings that seemed to him 'like a cross between a frog and a man!' The Lovecraft fictions abound with them, and his tale of Innsmouth suggests a horrible reason why the batrachian servitors of C. would not want a dead man, thus leaving Greenbie to escape.

"Apropos the Greenbie manuscript, compare such accounts as are available of the mysterious vanishing of the *Marie Celeste*, and other ships. If sea creatures could board boats of such size as the *Vigilant* (cf. Johansen), why not larger ships? If the hypothe-

sis is tenable, therein lies a plausible if incredibly horrible explanation for many a mystery of the sea, for countless derelicts and vanished vessels. NB: On the other hand, the only accounts which might constitute direct evidence, it must be remembered, are those of men whose wits might have been jumbled by unaccustomed hardships."

There were many more notes of a similar nature; but there were also others, profoundly puzzling, evidently stemming from these primary notes. As my great-uncle delved deeper and deeper into his research, I found his notes tending toward growing obscurity. For instance, he wrote in one place, quite clearly under the stress of some excitement—"Could there not be some purely scientific principle involved in the time-space travel reputedly the power of the Ancient Ones? That is to say, something related to time as dimension, reducing C. and the others to utterly alien beings subject to other laws, however antipodal to natural laws as we know them?" And again: "What about the possibility of atomic disintegration with subsequent re-integration across time and space? And, if time is to be viewed purely as a dimension, and space as another, the 'openings' which are repeatedly mentioned must be fissures in those dimensions. What else?"

But the most disturbing aspect of my great-uncle's strange quest did not make its appearance in his notes until the last few months of his life. Then there began to become manifest a marked uneasiness, and definite evidence that the cult or cults in which my great-uncle was interested were not phenomena of past time, but had survived into the present, and were, moreover, definitely malign and evil. For there appeared in the body of the notes certain patent questions—put down for himself, as if my great-uncle were asking himself questions the import of which he could hardly credit.

"If I saw rightly," he wrote in one place, after returning from Transylvania, "my traveling companion was of marked batrachian aspect. His speech, however, was the purest French. Nothing to show where he boarded the Simplon-Orient. It took effort to lose him at Calais. Am I being followed? If so, where can *they* have found out?" And again: "Followed in Rangoon, without doubt. Follower extremely elusive, but, judging from a reflection in a window pane, not one of the Deep Ones. In stature suggestive of the Tcho-Tcho people, which would be apropos, since their habitat is supposedly near by." And yet once more: "Three in Arkham, in the vicinity of the University. The only question seems to be: how much do they suspect that I know? And will they wait until I publish, as in the cases of Shrewsbury, Vordennes, and the others?"

The implications in all this were crystal clear.

My great-uncle, hard on the track of a strange, malign cult, had come to their notice, and his existence was menaced by followers of the cult. Then it was, with instinctive conviction, that I knew my great-uncle's death in Limehouse was not an accident at all, but a carefully arranged murder!

2.

I come now to those events which confirmed my resolution to abandon my Creole project and take up instead the problem which had engaged the attention of my Great-Uncle Asaph Gilman. My purely cursory interest had become crystalized at the conviction that my great-uncle had been murdered, but when I began to cast about for some clue as to where to begin my search for his murderers and the cult to which they belonged, I did not know where to start. Search his papers as I might, there seemed

to be no one place to which, or person to whom, I could go in order to make a beginning. Despite all the terrible hints and suggestions of my great-uncle's papers and books, there was no true focal point; considered as a whole, the papers were more in the nature of preliminary work leading up to hypotheses and conclusions which my great-uncle had not had time to make.

What resolved my doubts as well as the obscurities of my great-uncle's papers was a series of extraordinary dreams and their even more extraordinary aftermath. These dreams began on the very first night after I had come to my decision in regard to my great-uncle's search culminating in his murder before he had had opportunity to conclude his quest. The dreams were of a remarkable vividness, and each was a singularly perfect unit, with none of the haziness, the incoherence, and the incredible phantasmagoria of most dreams. They were, in effect, astonishing in that they were vivid enough to seem not dreams at all, but clairvoyant and clairaudient experiences transcending natural laws. Moreover, each dream impressed me sufficiently to impel me to set it down for my future reference, so that I might forget no single detail of the experience.

My first dream, then, was as follows:

Someone called my name. "Claiborne, Claiborne Boyd! Claiborne, Claiborne Boyd!" The voice was a man's voice, and it seemed to come from a very great distance, and from *above*. I saw myself wake from sleep; as I did so, the head and shoulders of a man appeared. The head was that of an elderly man with long white hair, clean-shaven, with a firm, pronounced chin, and full lips. He had a Roman nose, and wore odd dark glasses with shields running along the side of the eyes as well. Since I awakened, he said no more but bade me watch.

The scene changed; the head faded away and vanished. I, my bed, my room likewise vanished. The scene which came up in its

stead was vaguely familiar. I passed along a street which appeared to be Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was away from the university, and in a district where professional people live. There was someone I was meant to see here, and presently I found him; it was a tall, gaunt man, dressed in black. He walked oddly, and wore a muffler and tinted glasses. Though he appeared to be a stranger in Cambridge, he knew just where he wanted to go. He entered a building and went directly to a suite of offices. The offices were those of Judah and Byron, Attorneys at Law. He entered the offices and asked to see Mr. Judah. After a moment of waiting, he was shown into Mr. Judah's office.

Mr. Judah was a middle-aged man who wore pince-nez. His hair was beginning to grey at his temples, and he dressed plainly in grey. The suit was gabardine, the cut severe. I heard them talk.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Smith," said Mr. Judah. "What can I do for you?"

Mr. Smith's voice was very strange; it sounded muffled and distorted, as if he had a speech defect brought about by overproduction of saliva. He said, "I understand you represent the estate of the late Asaph Gilman, sir?"

Mr. Judah nodded.

"Mr. Gilman was engaged on a work in which I, as a fellow scholar, have a deep interest. I made Mr. Gilman's acquaintance in Vienna over a year ago, and I was given to understand at that time that he had papers and notes about his progress in his work. These papers cannot be of any conceivable interest to anyone but a scholar similarly interested. Can you tell me whether there is any possibility of my acquiring them from Mr. Gilman's estate?"

Mr. Judah shook his head. "I am sorry, Mr. Smith, but Mr. Gilman's papers have gone to his next of kin, at his special request."

"Perhaps I could arrange to purchase them from him?"

"That is out of our hands, Mr. Smith."

"Can you give me his address, sir?"

Though Mr. Judah hesitated, he finally said, "I see no harm in it," and gave him my name and address.

The scene vanished, and the head of the elderly white-haired man returned. He told me to take care of the papers, to conceal them in a safe place. Then the dream ended.

Now, in itself, such a dream would not be unusual, following my prolonged study of my great-uncle's strange papers. But its extraordinary vividness made such an impression on me, not only at my awaking after the dream had run its course, but throughout the following morning, that I was at last impelled to place a long-distance call to Mr. Judah himself, and ask him whether anyone had made inquiry for me.

"My dear Mr. Boyd, what a coincidence!" his voice came over the wire—in precisely the accents of the Mr. Judah of my dream. "We had a man in here yesterday asking after you—or, rather, after your great-uncle's papers. A Mr. Japhet Smith. We took the liberty of giving him your address. Probably a crackpot, but evidently quite harmless. He seemed to want to buy your great-uncle's papers or at least to consult them."

As may well be imagined, this confirmation of my dream had the most surprising effect on me. I had no longer any doubt whatsoever that "Mr. Japhet Smith" was not a fellow-scholar at all, but a representative of the same malign cult which had brought about my great-uncle's death. If this were the case, he would certainly come to New Orleans after the papers. What then, to do? He was not likely to be deterred by my refusal to sell them, but would undoubtedly take other means to obtain them. I determined, therefore, to lose no time in re-arranging and packing my great-uncle's papers, and moving them from my quarters to some place of concealment where Smith or any of his fellows would not be likely to discover them.

I spent the afternoon, therefore, going through the papers once more, and, in doing so, I came across two very curious jottings on the backs of envelopes. They were more than usually

cryptic, and both made pointed reference to the same subject. The first, evidently made while my great-uncle was in Cairo, read simply: "Andrada? Surely not!" The second, made on his last visit to Paris, just prior to his fateful visit to London, read: "Ask Andros about Andrada." I recognized these jottings at last for a direction in which to take up my great-uncle's quest. But who was Andros? And where was he?

I redoubled my efforts to find more information in the papers before me, some further clue to the identity of Andros or Andrada—but there was nothing. However, in view of the fact that both names were Latin in origin, it seemed fairly reasonable to deduce that their bearers lived in some Spanish or Portuguese speaking country; and, since my great-uncle's travels had taken him only for the briefest of times into Spain and Portugal, it was far more likely that these late objects of his interest were residents of some other place on the globe—from the Azores to South America. That it was in all probability South America seemed indicated, since there were enough hints in my great-uncle's papers to suggest that his next visit would be made to some South American place.

But I had little time to speculate farther, for the day was drawing to a close, and much work still needed to be done to make the papers ready for transportation. I was motivated not only by my curious dream and its confirmation, but by an even stranger conviction that I could not afford to lose any time whatsoever. I worked, therefore, with all haste, and by the end of the day I had finished. True, certain facts from my great-uncle's papers I had committed to memory; but all his books and papers themselves I had carefully re-packed, and by the end of that day I had had them taken to the local express office, and committed them to ninety-day storage, prepaying all charges, with additional payment to cover subsequent instruction—that, if the two trunks were

not called for within the set period, they were to be shipped to the library of Miskatonic University, in Arkham. Following this, I had taken all receipts and mailed them to myself in care of Judah and Byron, with a brief covering note of instructions sent separately.

When I returned to my apartment, darkness had fallen. Was it my imagination or had someone been skulking about outside the building in which I stayed? Surely Mr. Japhet Smith had not had time to reach New Orleans. I shook myself free of my fancies and grimly mounted to my apartment, half expecting to find evidence of unwelcome callers. But there was nothing, and I allowed myself a brief smile at the manner in which my great-uncle's odd papers and my strange dream had taken hold of me—brief, because I remembered, if my great-uncle had been right in his speculation that the cult of Cthulhu had members all over the world, it was certainly not impossible that there were some in New Orleans and that Smith might well have reached one of them by telegraph! And, indeed, had not my great-uncle asked me to keep posted for any hint of strange pagan worship—by which surely he had reference to that of Cthulhu and those nebulous others?

I put out my light and went to the window, standing behind the diaphanous curtains to look down into the street below. The quarter where I lived was one of the oldest in New Orleans; its buildings were gracious, if old-fashioned; they were inhabited by artists, writers, and students, for the most part, and certain devotees of music from the immortals to the blues were likewise domiciled in the vicinity. The street, therefore, was likely to be lively at all hours, and now, between nine and ten o'clock in the evening—a still comparatively early hour—there was no lack of people. It took some time to isolate anyone who did not seem to belong to the street. Even then, I could not be sure. But certainly there was one individual, not plainly visible, who might indeed be watching this house, and my apartment in particular. He walked

slowly up one side of the block and down the other, and, though he never glanced in the direction of the house, he was aware of every opening and closing of the door; of that I was as certain as if I had had incontrovertible knowledge. I was struck, too, by his gait, which was peculiarly shuffling, like that of Japhet Smith in my dream—and, more damnably still, akin to that gait ascribed to the batrachian followers of Cthulhu in various of the accounts accompanying the papers of which I had now temporarily disposed.

I drew back from the window, my mind in turmoil. Lacking any knowledge, I could not proceed against a casual walker on the street, who might embarrass me by turning out to be a poet in pursuit of the muse—which would probably be as natural and readily-accepted an explanation as any that might be given. It was not too far-fetched to suppose that some attempt to get at my room might be made. However, after sitting for some time in the dark trying to decide what I might do if our positions were reversed, I concluded that, if the fellow below were actually a watcher, the course of events must have been as follows—Smith had telegraphed to put a watch on me and my apartment; the watch had arrived fortuitously during my absence with the trunks, and would now stay, perhaps changing places with someone else for part of the time, until Smith himself could arrive. Presumably the members of the cult were not eager to create "incidents" by means of which keys to their presence might be afforded anyone curious enough to look for them; hence it seemed unlikely that any sort of attack would be made until Smith had satisfied himself that no other course was open to him.

Nevertheless, I waited in the darkness until midnight; only then, when the street below was deserted, and I could no longer catch sight of the watcher, did I venture to go to bed.

That night I had the second dream, which was even more startling than the first, though its full import was not destined to come

to me for some days thereafter. As in the case of the first—particularly after the confirmation of that first dream—I made a full and complete record of it.

The dream began exactly as did the first dream.

The grey-haired man with dark glasses appeared as before. This time there was more than a haze surrounding him. In the background rose what appeared to be a great building of some kind. It was not clear whether the background was an interior or exterior, but there was a shadowy representation of what seemed to be a massive stone table between the head and the masonry behind. It was masonry of utterly alien construction—a great vaulted chamber, if an interior, the stone groinings of which were lost in shadow above; there appeared to be a round window of colossal size, and monolithic columns beside which the head was incredibly puny. There were shelves holding gigantic books along the walls; strange hieroglyphs were visible on their backs. Indistinctly, carvings appeared to stand out on the monstrous megalithic granite masonry, the pieces of which seemed to be convex-topped blocks supported by precise fitted concave-bottomed courses. No flooring was visible anywhere, but neither was any part below the chest of the individual who called to me.

I was told to pay close attention.

The scene faded. Once more a familiar street appeared. This time I recognized it at once. It was a street in Natchez, Mississippi, where I had pursued my studies prior to taking up the Creole study in New Orleans. I seemed to move along the street, but no one was aware of me. The post office came into view. I entered the post office. I went through the lobby, past the rows of boxes, into the interior of the post office. The postmaster and his assistants were at work there. No one noticed me.

Now something very strange took place. The shelving into which letters were placed for shipment from the post office appeared to fade, and down behind the shelves I saw a thick letter. It was addressed to me, and I recognized the handwriting as my great-

uncle's. It was post-marked London the day before my great-uncle's death. It was clear immediately what happened. The letter—like my great-uncle's last card from Paris—had been sent to my Natchez address, and forwarded from there, for it bore my New Orleans address alongside the scratched-out Natchez address, but somehow the letter slipped down and was overlooked. Now it was not seen by anyone in the post office.

Once more I heard the voice of the man in black spectacles. This time he told me to mark his every word.

"Mr. Boyd," he said—his manner friendly but urgent—"you must do precisely as I say. As you know, your apartment is being watched. Tomorrow Mr. Smith will call; it is not necessary that you see him. Sometime tomorrow, prepare to leave your rooms without the necessity of returning there, make sure that you are not followed, and go to Natchez. Retrieve the letter in the post office. It is from your great-uncle and it is clear enough to enable you to follow instructions if you are still determined to do so. Take the utmost care that this letter does not go astray."

Then the voice faded away.

It is a tribute to the vividness of the dream that I did not for a moment question its validity; from the instant that I awoke in the darkness of my room, I knew that my great-uncle's last letter lay lost in the post office at Natchez, and I knew, too, that with the coming of dawn, I would set about to follow the precise instructions set down by my mentor in dreams—go to Natchez and read my great-uncle's final letter with every intention of following any direction it might contain.

Despite a gnawing curiosity to come face to face with Japhet Smith, I realized full well that once he knew of my unwillingness to part with my great-uncle's papers, it would be triply difficult if not impossible for me to elude pursuit. It was, therefore, with something akin to reluctance that I evaded my follower next day—for I was followed; I had not the shadow of a doubt about that;

and my follower was an individual of suggestively repellent aspect—wide-mouthed, squat-browed, lidless-eyed, and almost earless, with an odd kind of leathery skin. I had no difficulty doing so by means of one of the most time-honored methods of avoiding pursuit—going into one door of a building and out the other.

In Natchez I could not, of course, hint that I knew of the existence of my great-uncle's lost letter; but I simply explained that I had come up from New Orleans to inquire after a letter I should have received, and prevailed upon them finally, after my earnest and anxious entreaties, to look behind the rack where I knew it to be lying. There it was found, amidst astonished apologies, and given to me. By this time, I had long ceased to wonder by what agency I had been acquainted with this and the facts about Smith; that my dreams were not orthodox dream experiences was only too manifest, but by what power I acquired this dream-knowledge I could not surmise.

The tangibility of the letter in hand, however, overcame speculation. I opened it eagerly and read. A glance was enough to assure me that it was of the utmost importance insofar as my great-uncle's strange quest was concerned, and that it had been written at a time of great stress, when my great-uncle no longer had any doubt about the identity of his pursuers, and when he had some intimation of his fate.

"My dear nephew," he had written in a script slightly larger than his usual small writing, doubtless because of his agitation, "I feel it incumbent upon me to take such steps as might assure me of some success in the search I have been conducting for many months—even if after death, for it is certain that my footsteps are dogged by some of the Deep Ones day and night. Some time ago I made provision in my will that you were to receive my papers, as well as a modest stipend to aid your work, whether it followed my own course or not. I make haste now to acquaint you with the nature of that work.

"Some time ago—let it suffice to say that it was after my retirement from Harvard—I stumbled upon a most curious and rare book, the *Necronomicon*, by an Arabian, Abdul Alhazred—a book concerning which perhaps the less expounded the better, for it dealt with a very ancient worship, with cults and cult rites, weaving an entire mythology which seemed at first glance to parallel the familiar Creation story, but which presently touched upon strange corners in my memory, so that before I knew, I was deeply wrapped in the mythology of which it treated. This was, candidly, because I knew of certain events which seemed most oddly to verify some of the things written about so many centuries ago, and I determined, therefore, to study the subject with closer attention—one of those impulses which often come to retired educators. Would that I had turned away from that accursed book and forgotten it!

"For not only did I unearth evidence of certain damnable facts concerning the book and allied texts which I studied, but I discovered that cults of peoples were devoted to serving ancient beings still in our own time. And I learned the truth of that strange couplet of the Arab's—

*That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange eons even death may die.*

"There is far too little time to tell you all. Believe me when I say only that there would appear to be indisputable and damning evidence that this earth, in common with other planets and stars in this and other universes, was at one time inhabited by beings not altogether of flesh and blood, or at least of that flesh and blood we understand, and not entirely of matter as we understand it, beings called the Great Old Ones, whose marks are still to be found in hidden places of the world—the Easter Island pieces, for one—beings which had been expelled from the elder stars by the

Elder Gods, who were beneficent, while the Great Old Ones or Ancient Ones were malign in intent insofar as mankind is concerned. I have neither time nor space to recapitulate this entire mythology to you. Suffice it to say that these Great Old Ones did not die, but were imprisoned or took refuge—this is not clear, but presumably it is the former—in great subterranean places on earth and on other stars, and legend has it that 'when the stars are right,' which is to say—when the stars are once again in the position in which they were at the time of the vanishing of the Great Old Ones: a cycle, as it were—they will rise again, the way having been prepared for them by their servants on earth.

"Of these, the most dreaded is called Cthulhu. I have come upon evidence of belief in Cthulhu in all corners of the globe—in the far north, certain Eskimos carry on a ritual to the supreme elder devil or *tornasuk*, an image of which bears a striking resemblance to those hideous bas-reliefs supposedly typical of the Great Old Ones in appearance; in the Arabian deserts as well as in Egypt and Morocco, there is worship of a fearful being of the sea; in queer, backward areas of our own country there is a devilish adherence to an ancient belief in things half frog, half man—and so on, without end. I became convinced that worship of Hastur and Shub-Niggurath and Yog-Sothoth was less wide-spread than that of Cthulhu, and I set out to discover as many pockets of such worship as possible.

"Admittedly, I did so at first with the most impersonal of motives. But, as the final dread knowledge came—that these servants were preparing to open the portals of time and space to beings of which our own science knows nothing and against which it is likely to be powerless,—I ceased being impersonal, and I began consciously to attempt to learn the identity of the most potent of the groups following and serving the cult of Cthulhu, and the leader of that group, bent upon doing everything in my power to

end the activities of that group, even if it meant exterminating their leader myself.

"Though I am close to learning his identity, I am yet too far away. Somehow those hellish frog-men or fish-men, whichever they may be called, known as the Deep Ones, who are among the closest servants of Cthulhu, have discovered my activities. I do not know whether they are aware of my intention; they cannot be, for I have not heretofore set it down or confessed it. Yet they are watching me—as they have been watching for months past—and I feel that I may not have much time left.

"There is no good in burdening you with further details.

"I want to say only that if you decide to carry on, I think the most likely focal point of activity now is in Peru, in the Inca country beyond the old fortress of Salapunco. The first thing you must do is to go to Lima, call on Professor Vibberto Andros of the University there; tell him I have sent you—or better still, show him this letter—and ask him about Andrada."

That, apart from his signature, was the complete letter. Accompanying it was a crudely-drawn map of a terrain utterly unknown to me, and with no identifying key.

3.

Professor Vibberto Andros was a short, thin man, venerable in appearance, with silky white hair, and an ascetic face. His skin was dark, but not swarthy, and his eyes were black. He read my great-uncle's last letter with great deliberation, but with interest he made no effort to conceal. When at last he put it down, he shook his head sympathetically and expressed his condolence at my great-uncle's death, of which the letter was his first knowledge.

I thanked him and asked the question I had to ask, regardless

of such inner convictions as I had—whether, in his opinion, my great-uncle suffered from mental aberrations.

"I think not," he replied judiciously. Then he shrugged and added, "But who is to decide this—as you call it—'mental aberration'? Neither of us, surely. You think it perhaps because of this—" he tapped the letter—"and his papers? But I am much afraid these things are true, as he has written. I do not know to what degree, nor whether more or less. Your great-uncle was not alone in his belief. And there are books, manuscripts, documents—rare, well cared for in some of our great libraries, seldom consulted. But they are there, written by people separated by centuries in time, by space incalculable—all treat of the same phenomena. Surely that is not coincidence?"

I agreed that it was not likely and asked about Andrada.

He raised his eyebrows. "It puzzles me he should press you to ask about him. I do not know why he wishes to know. Andrada—Fr. Andrada—is a priest, a missionary among the Indians of the interior. In his own way he is a great man, possibly even a saintly man, though the Church hesitates to recognize him as such—the Church is exceedingly careful in such matters, as no doubt you know, and that is well-advised, since it is presumably infallible in spiritual matters, and it cannot afford to be in error. Andrada has worked for many years among the Indians, and I understand his conversions are numbered well in the thousands."

"For some reason my great-uncle believed you could give me some information about Andrada which he sought," I said, choosing my words carefully. "Would it be possible to see him in person? Is he in Lima?"

"I am sure he would see you, certainly. But the problem is to find him. His work takes him into the remotest places of the country—and, as you know, we have many, since most of Peru is along the coast, and the mountains are difficult and treacherous—even

for many of the Inca descendants."

I went on then to inquire further about the myth-patterns into which my great-uncle had been researching, and, in the course of our conversation, it occurred to me to ask my host whether he knew anyone fitting the description of my dream mentor. I had no sooner mentioned the distinctive dark spectacles, than Professor Andros nodded and smiled.

"Who could forget him, indeed? A very wise man. I met him many years ago in Mexico City at a convention of educators there. I was much impressed by him."

"A South American, then?"

"On the contrary, a countryman of yours—Dr. Laban Shrewsbury, of Arkham, Massachusetts."

"But he is dead!" I cried out involuntarily. "That cannot be!"

Professor Andros turned his black eyes on me and gazed at me steadily for a long moment before replying. "I wonder. I have said he was a very wise man—I do not mean merely in the assimilation of knowledge. He vanished, I think, and his house burned. But previous to that he vanished for twenty years, and turned up again, after which he vanished once more, and his house was then destroyed. No *corpus delicti* was established—no part of any human body was discovered in the ruins of that house or elsewhere. I think a wise man would conclude only that his death was not proven." His eyes narrowed and he went on. "But when you say it cannot be, you must have reason. What is it? Have you seen him, then?"

Thus bluntly asked, I outlined briefly my dream experiences.

He listened with grave interest, nodding from time to time. "The description is right," he said when I had finished. "The sound of the man seems right. I am fascinated by your description of his background—more than I can say. Ancient, monolithic chambers! What a concept! And surely not of earth."

"How can one rationally explain such dreams?" I demanded.

He smiled wearily. "My boy, how can one rationally explain one's self? Do not ask me."

I took out the map my great-uncle had enclosed with his last letter and spread it before the professor, saying nothing. He looked at it for a long time, following the crude, hastily-drawn lines, gazing intently at the little squares, those with and those without crosses, and the circles and rectangles. Finally he put a delicate index finger on the map and began to trace it.

"Here," he said, "is Lima. This is the trail into the mountains, to Cuzco, then there to Machu Picchu, and there to Sachsa huaman. There is Ollantaytambo, and along there the Cordillera de Vilcanota. Over here, surely, is Salapunco. The object of the map would be the area beyond; the trail ends there."

"And what region is that?"

"A country largely unknown, and largely uninhabited. It is curious, this map. Right now there is much unrest among the Indians there—the kind of unrest which has no meaning, but which is ever-menacing. He could not have known."

But I knew intuitively that my great-uncle *had* known—how, I could not tell.

And I was certain that I had not come to the wrong place, that my great-uncle's researches were leading him to the right source of the secret world-wide resurgence of the cult of Cthulhu! Somehow I must go into the interior.

"How will I know Andrada when I see him?" I asked.

Professor Andros placed an old photograph of the priest before me. It had been clipped from a newspaper and showed a man of burning, fanatic eyes and mouth, almost grim in appearance—his asceticism and intensity were manifest in every aspect of his features.

"If you go beyond Machu Picchu, take care. You are armed?"

I nodded.

"You won't need guides until after Cuzco. I wish you would keep me informed of your progress. You will find runners at Cuzco, who can travel from your camp with letters which can be sent in the regular way from Cuzco."

I thanked him and returned to my hotel, burdened with books he gave me—books containing transcripts of the *Sussex Manuscript*, the *Celeano Fragments*, and the *Cultes des Goules* of the Comte d'Erlette—books which contained in their pages the incredible legendry of the Elder Gods and their banishment of the Great Old Ones from Betelgueze—Azathoth, the blind idiot god; Yog-Sothoth, the All-in-One and One-in-All; Great Cthulhu, said to lie dreaming in his great house in sunken R'lyeh; Hastur, the Unspeakable, Him Who Is Not To Be Named, hidden on a dark star near Aldebaran; Nyarlathotep, abiding in darkness; Ithaqua, riding the winds high above earth; Cthugha, who will return from Fomalhaut; Tsathoggua, waiting in N'kai—all, all waiting upon the propitious time, and upon the activities of their secret servants among men for a return to their dominions—a grotesque lore out of the remote past, but a lore with such an incalculable mass of supporting evidence stretching from the most distant times into the present as to be blasphemously shocking in its suggestiveness. I could well understand my great-uncle's desire to encompass his purpose, and I understood his imperturbability in the prospect of facing death, the casual manner in which he could write of it against the urgency inherent in his desire to do all in his power to ward off the rise of Cthulhu's minions. I read far into the night, long after the hotel was quiet and even the drowsy hum of Lima's night life had subsided.

That night I had the third of the dream visitations of my mentor.

Dr. Shrewsbury appeared as before, heralding his arrival by

calling me by name. This time there was no change of scene, but only the single monolithic chamber of the previous dream, with the Doctor's head and shoulders struck out against that weird and impressively unearthly background. He spoke to me at length, warning me to acquaint no one with my purpose in seeking Andrada, urging me to take the utmost care, and, once convinced of the object of my search, not to delay action. The leader of the cult must die, and as much destruction as possible must be wrought in the headquarters of the cult, which was deep in the interior beyond the ancient fortress of Salapunco.

He went on to say to me that my escape from this country would be all but impossible. Yet there was one way in which it might be accomplished. I must wait to go on my trek into the interior of Peru until I found at my disposal three articles, which would be delivered to me within the course of a day or so. These articles were, first, a phial of a golden mead which would render me insensitive to travel in space high over earth; second, a five-pointed star; third, a whistle. The star-stone, he explained, would protect me against the Deep Ones and other minions of Cthulhu, but not against Cthulhu or his body-servants. The whistle would summon to my aid a gigantic flying creature which would transport me to a place where my body would lie in suspended animation for an endless time, while my essence would join Dr. Shrewsbury far across the gulfs of interstellar space. After my purpose had been accomplished, and before the vengeance of the survivors could be wreaked on me, I was to drink the mead, carrying the star-stone, blow the whistle, and repeat a strange formula—"Iä! Iä! Hastur! Hastur cf'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!"—and submit to whatever happened thereafter without fear.

Extraordinary as this dream was, what followed it was even more so.

As the dawn approached, I was awakened—so I dreamed—by the

sound of great wings. Then, at the window of my room, I saw a monstrous, horrible winged creature; from its back stepped a young man. He entered the room through the window, placed something on my bureau, and went out the way he had come. The winged thing, only a very small part of which I could see, carried him instantly out of sight, the sound of its wings diminishing with great rapidity.

Two hours later, when I awoke, I went doubtfully to the bureau—and there, exactly where I had dreamed—or *had I dreamed it?*—lay three objects—a whistle, a phial of a golden liquid, and a little grey-green star-shaped stone, the exact duplicate of that stone among my great-uncle's collected pieces now reposing in storage in New Orleans!

I shall start into the interior before the day is out.

4.

9th November

Dear Professor Andros:

I am encamped in the vicinity of Machu Picchu, and, though I have not been here more than seven hours, I have already happened upon some curiously disquieting facts. It came about through one of the guides who was retained for me through the agency of the fellow Santos whom you recommended. Yesterday, while on the way to the ancient Inca citadel, I stopped some natives along the trail and asked them if they knew the whereabouts of Fr. Andrada. Crossing themselves, they gestured behind them, in the direction we were traveling, but could give me no precise information. However, the guide in question rode up not long after and confessed that he had overheard my inquiry, and that, if I did not fear to leave the trail at Machu Picchu, he would take me to his older brother, who lay ill at his mountain home not far away.

I said I would not be afraid; so, at the appointed place, I rode with him perhaps three miles from the trail we followed, and found his brother as he had described. Both men, I need hardly say, are of Quichua-Ayar stock; the brother, who appeared to me to be dying, was a convert to Catholicism—one of Andrada's—though my guide, a much younger man, was not. Learning that I sought Andrada, he was at first extremely reluctant to speak; but as soon as he understood that I did not personally know Andrada, and that I was not a follower of the priest's, he began to talk rapidly, as if he feared he would not have enough time to tell me what he wished to say.

I cannot reproduce his language here, of course; he spoke in garbled Spanish, and the gist of what he had to say was extremely puzzling. He confessed to a great admiration for Andrada, amounting almost to veneration. But Andrada, he said, was dead. He was "no more as once he had been." Andrada was not Andrada; he was another, whose honeyed words taught evil things. He said he knew where a "paper" from Andrada was concealed, and if I could spare his brother, he would send him there to obtain it for me. It would take two days on foot from this place. Naturally, I assented readily, and the guide has now gone on his mission.

I make haste to report this to you. I do not at the moment know what to make of it, but the old Indian was much agitated, and his sincerity is not to be doubted; moreover, he seemed relieved to be able to tell someone who might understand. I have the opportunity to dispatch this letter by the hands of a party of American tourists who have just completed a guided tour through the Inca ruins. I am, yours cordially,

Claiborne Boyd

10th November

Dear Professor Andros,

My guide returned last night with the "paper" reputed to have

been written by Andrada. I have read it, and I conceive it to be of such importance that I am entrusting it to the hand of one of my runners to be taken to Cuzco and mailed to you without further delay. The paper is evidently but a fragment of a larger account. I am at the moment about to remove my encampment into the gorge of the mountains beyond Salapunco, near which place, I have been told, Andrada is soon to conduct what I understand to be a "revival" or "mission" or some such similar affair. I am, sincerely,

Claiborne Boyd

The Andrada paper in translation.

"... Who this fellow is, or whence he comes, none knows. He is assuredly evil. He plays strange music on ancient pipes resembling flutes. Since he has come there is unrest and wickedness abounding. Everywhere is evil, even in the clouds; and, rising from the waters there are strange sounds—as if great creatures walked in subterranean places. I have inveighed against him, and I shall not cease my endeavours to overcome the evil teachings which are his.

"A great fear is upon my people. They speak to me of evil older than earth, of strange beings, and of one whom they name Kulu or some such name who will rise again out of the sea and become master over all earth, and, in time, over the entire universe. I have questioned some of them as closely as their reticence would permit, and it is not the anti-Christ they fear, but a being 'not a man,' in their words, who was 'old as time' before the teachings of Christ were made known to mankind. One of my people drew a crude picture of this being, as it was handed down to him from his ancestors. I thought I would see a representation of Pachacamac, to whom human sacrifices were made, or of Illa Tici Viracocha—but it was neither of these—though it might have been a drawing of one of the supernatural monsters in which the old Incas had belief. It was a bestial representation of a creature which was a horrible

travesty on man—squat, anthropoid, with tentacles and a beard of serpents or tentacles, clawed paws or hands, and winged in some fashion, similar to bats.

"He has come preaching the worship of this being, and predicting his 'return.' I asked my people whether any of them remembered Kulu. None did, but some confessed that their people in past generations remembered. But none had seen him. Many, I felt sure, concealed their belief in him. It is dismaying to observe this tendency among my people. I shall take steps to drive out this stranger, if need be with the lash. Yet I am not unaware of a strong aura of danger, of mortal menace which abounds everywhere—not the evil of Satanism, but a greater evil beyond that, more primal and terrible. I cannot define it, but I feel that my very soul is in the greatest danger. . . ."

14th November

Dear Professor Andros,

I have seen Andrada—as yet only from a distance by means of my telescope. The guides told me it would be dangerous for me to approach too closely; so I took their advice, set up my telescope, and watched his gathering. The man I saw in the cassock was not the man whose photograph you were kind enough to show me. Yet he was singled out to me as Andrada, and he played the part of Andrada. That is, he harangued the natives gathered to hear him—I should estimate them at three hundred. And certainly his harangue was not a Christian sermon, for he had them groveling. What I found most disturbing was the resemblance between him and the Japhet Smith of my dream; certainly they were not one and the same, I do not suggest it—but it is equally certain that there is a relationship between them, for the Andrada I saw by means of my glass has that curiously batrachian mouth, those lidless eyes and the strange pasty complexion associated with Smith; nor was there any sign of ears. I think there cannot be any doubt

but that Fr. Andrada has been killed, and someone is masquerading as Andrada for a far more horrible purpose than one might believe at first glance. And it is not too much to believe that he is one of the Deep Ones. . . .

Later: One of my native guides, who mingled with the "mission" before Andrada, has returned and tells me that Andrada spoke in a tongue foreign to him, though it awoke something in memory—he says he may have heard it as a small boy. What has seemed to me most illuminatingly conclusive is a sentence he says was repeated over and over as a kind of chant by Andrada, and repeated by his listeners. He strove to reproduce it for me, and, from his attempts, I have no question but that it was the strange chant heretofore recorded in various places, and always associated with this dread worship—

Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.

which has been translated to read: "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming."

Next morning: Dr. Shrewsbury appeared to me last night, apparently in dream—I put it "apparently" because I am no longer so sure that I am dreaming. I now understand far more of this grotesque and shocking cult-worship. It would appear, from what S. says, that he has made use of certain servitors of Hastur, who oppose Cthulhu's return, to effect opposition in fact to the minions of Cthulhu. Hence, the winged creatures of my previous dream-experience. The mead, it would seem, is a soporific which has more than the ordinary properties of such drugs, but separates the self—the astral or spirit, I suppose one could put it—from the body, which is left inanimate, but living. The body is transported to a place of safety, and the self takes another corporeal form in another place—but not the form of a man—a place far removed from our universe—Celaeno in the Hyades. He is able to com-

municate with me at will by a kind of hypnosis. . . . Andrada, he says, is as I suspect, but the headquarters of the cult is in a secret place of worship once used by the Incas, an abandoned temple cut into the rock of the gorge not far from our camp. (Andrada survived a previous attempt Dr. Shrewsbury made to destroy the "door" to Cthulhu at that place.) I am going there as soon as it is dusk tonight.

Later: I found the meeting-place. It lay at the end of a flight of steps which began behind a hidden stone door opening into the solid wall of rock out of the gorge—evidently an ancient Incan passage, for the rough-hewn stones were similar to those in Machu Picchu and Sachcahuaman. The place of worship appeared to be an old temple of some kind, as described, but there was no opening to the sky, contrary to the religious custom. There was, however, a pool of some size—the room itself was of cavernous size, as I should have said at once, capable of holding, I should estimate, several thousand people—and from this pool emanated a hellish subaqueous green light. It would appear that the worshippers gather around the pool, for the ancient altar at the far end of the room has been long in disuse. I did not remain there long, for I was aware of strange stirrings of the water, and the sound of a distant music, as if worshippers were approaching, though, on my emergence from the meeting-place, I saw no one.

* * * * *

This is perhaps the last you will hear from me.

Learning from one of my guides that an important gathering of some kind was to take place in the old temple room in the gorge tonight, I returned to the spot and hid myself. I had hardly completed my concealment in the recesses of the altar, when there was an ominous stirring and churning of that green-litten water, and something rose to the surface.

What I saw there nauseated me.

One glance sent me reeling backward—that I did not cry out and betray myself was due only to the fact that sight of the monstrosity risen to the surface of that subterranean lake paralyzed my voice. It was such a creature as can be dreamed of only in the wildest dreams of hashish-eaters—a bestial travesty on humanity, a creature that seemed to have been once a man, with tentacles and gills, and a terrible mouth, from which issued a series of eldritch raspings, similar to the distorted notes of a flute or oboe! When I looked again, it had vanished. I thought at once that it had risen in expectation of someone's coming, and I was not wrong—for the sound of footsteps rang down into the cavern, and in a moment someone entered the strange glowing light emanating from the subterranean lake.

It was Andrada—and in that light all those horrible batrachian characteristics of his features seemed most prominent. Without hesitation, I shot him.

What happened then is almost too incredible to set down. Andrada, mortally wounded, seemed to collapse upon himself. He fell, but the cassock hid him, for he collapsed inside it. *And then there issued from beneath the cassock a horrible, misshapen thing, a mass of convulsed flesh, which slithered and hopped, hopped and flapped toward the water's edge, expiring as it sank out of sight—leaving behind it only sandals, the empty cassock, and the ornaments worn on it!—a thing like a caricature of a frog-man, arrested in evolution and moulded together by some master-artist of the terrible!*

Once again the water started to churn, but already I had begun to lay dynamite charges. I did not look back; I lit the long fuse at the entrance to the cavern and ran from that place. I have heard the explosion, and my guides are nervous; I have told them they may return without me, for I know that I have no chance at all of returning along that trail alive. There is left only Dr. Shrews-

bury's way. I shall not see you again, and I hope only that this final communication reaches you in time. I know that what I have done is little enough, and much remains to be done in other corners of our world if we are to preserve it from the hideous and malign powers which lie in wait forever, to return again. Farewell.

Claiborne Boyd.

5.

Lima, Peru. December 7 (AP) . . . Despite an intensive search of the Cordillera de Vilcanota and the region around Salapunco, no trace of the body of Claiborne Boyd has been found. Boyd disappeared in mid-November, while on an expedition to study native customs and cults, according to Prof. Vibberto Andros, whom Boyd visited in this city. The remains of Boyd's camp revealed only that Boyd left without taking his paraphernalia along. An empty phial was thought to have contained poison, but a chemical analysis of what remained in it revealed it to be only a serum of some kind, not fatal, though tending to paralyze and induce prolonged sleep. Investigators were unable to explain certain widespread marks about the tent, suggesting the marks of bat-wings, greatly enlarged. . . .

IV.

THE KEEPER OF THE KEY

being

The Statement of Nayland Colum

(The manuscript of Nayland Colum, discovered in a bottle in Colum's cabin by Captain Robertson of the Sana, is preserved in the British Museum; hitherto, publication has been denied, but since certain aspects of the manuscript appear to have bearing on recent events in the South Pacific, the manuscript has been released for publication.)

1.

The most merciful thing in the world is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far.

—H. P. Lovecraft.

THERE IS SO LITTLE time to set down what I must write, to leave this record of the strange events which began in London not so very long ago, so little time because even now the sea and the wind rage around the ship, and we are delivered to *him* because we are in *his* element—if indeed what I fear is true. I have held and the professor has said that there is no *knowing*, but what after all is truth and what is legend, and which parts of the one rightfully belong to the other?

There are legends which are older than man. How then, did we come by them, if there were not some intelligence apart from man's to bring them down? Man has modified them, changed

them, fitted them into his own pattern. But the ancient writings remain, the age-old legends of the human race, the tales, vague and unconnected though they may be, of vast, cataclysmic events, of weird and terrible forces . . . and beings. . . .

It began, as I have written, only several weeks ago in London, though time seems longer than that, so crowded with events was the interval between. My outré novel, *The Watchers on the Other Side*, had not long been published, but it had already achieved that kind of minor success which can come to a novel which is not quite socially-aware enough to be called serious and yet not wholly light enough to be classified as mere entertainment; critics had acclaimed it, book-reviewers had helped it along with mild praise, and the public, sated with the ordinary run of mysteries and puzzle novels, had taken it to their hearts with enthusiasm. I was, in fact, preparing to move from my comparatively humble flat in Soho, when, late one night, I was aroused from my desk, at which I was laboriously trying to piece together a second novel in the same vein, by a cautious knock on my door.

I rose, somewhat tiredly, and opened it to an elderly gentleman whose aspect was kind without being benign, and yet also grim without being menacing. His hair was long and white, but his face was clean-shaven; his nose was strongly Roman, his chin almost prognathous. His eyes I could not see, for he wore dark glasses with shields at the sides, thus completely concealing his eyes. Above his glasses, his brows were unruly and greying.

His voice, when he spoke, was cultured. "I am Professor Laban Shrewsbury, and I am looking for the author of *The Watchers on the Other Side*."

I stepped aside and said, "Come in, please."

"Thank you, Mr. Colum."

He came into my cluttered flat, seated himself, and without preamble, made himself comfortable by throwing back his cape-

like coat, exposing a rather old-fashioned high collar and a flowing tie, and, folding his hands about the head of his cane, he began to speak.

"I should perhaps have written to ask whether I might call on you, Mr. Colum, but time is so short, and it occurred to me that the author of a book like yours would be adventurous enough by nature to understand. Do you mind if I ask you certain questions? Forgive me; I have already observed that you are at work on a new novel, meant to be a successor to *The Watchers on the Other Side*; and that it is not going well, I can guess. But it is just possible that I may be of some slight assistance to you in this regard—though not before some time has elapsed. But I should like now, if you do not object, to ask you a question or two about *The Watchers on the Other Side*."

"By all means," I said, curiously impressed by my visitor.

"Tell me, did you write that novel out of imagination alone?"

The question was perhaps a natural one. I smiled. "You are paying tribute to my poor skill," I said. "But, of course, the answer is no. I drew upon the ancient legends as much as possible."

"And struck upon the kernel of truth?"

"In legends, Professor?" My smile held, even at the risk of giving offense to him.

"Every legend, all lore, has at basis some truth, however distorted it may be in the process of being handed down from one generation to the next. And there are those strange and provocative parallels in the legends of various peoples. You will have encountered them. But no matter. Tell me one other thing—have you always, since publication of your novel, felt entirely secure as to your person?"

"Of course!" I answered without hesitation, but an afterthought stirred me; there had been evenings. . . .

"I think not," said my visitor with compelling self-confidence.

"On several occasions you have been followed—or should I say 'stalked' by stealthy habitants of a world of which you never dreamed save in the fiction which flowed from your pen by such coincidence. You see, I know, Mr. Colum, because on two of those occasions I myself followed your followers. A pity you could not have seen them! You would not have been able to recall their like, and you would not have forgotten the disturbing batrachian aspects of their features and bodies."

I stared at him in amazement. I *had* had the distinct impression that I was being followed on considerably more than one occasion. I had sought to dismiss it as the figment of my over-active imagination, but failed; so I had concluded at last that my followers were from among the dregs of Whitechapel, Wapping or Limehouse, and this, in turn, had inspired my determination to leave Soho behind.

Quite as if he read my thoughts, my visitor said, "But they would follow you wherever you went, Mr. Colum. I know."

Strangely, I had the inexplicable conviction that he *did* know, that perhaps he alone might provide me with a means of escape.

"I know you are adventurous," he went on. "I know you are possessed of more than ordinary courage. I have some knowledge of your exploits on two exploring expeditions in which you took part. I do not, therefore, come unprepared. But, admittedly, these exploits and your adventurous nature are not sufficient to interest me of themselves; no, but in combination with the fact that it was you, Nayland Colum, who wrote *The Watchers on the Other Side*, these facts are important to my purpose. In a very modest sense, I, too, am an explorer—but my explorations are not of the more mundane kind. I am not concerned with the mysterious and hidden places of the earth except only superficially and insofar as they are connected to the areas outside in which my real interest lies. But there is hidden somewhere on this earth a place I must

find, and I have only now settled upon a clue to the keeper of the key to this place."

"In what region is it?" I asked.

"Could I be certain, I would not need to seek it. It might be in the Andes, it might be in the South Pacific, it might be in Tibet or Mongolia, it might be in Egypt or the deserts of Arabia. It might even be in London. But let me tell you for what I am seeking—it is the place of concealment where Cthulhu lies waiting to rise again and spread his spawn over the earth and perhaps its sister planets."

"But Cthulhu is a legend—a creation of the imagination of the American writer, Lovecraft!" I protested.

"You say so. So do others. But consider the parallels which exist—the representations of godlike beings of evil which are so strangely similar in the creative life of the natives of Polynesia and the Incas of Peru, the ancient inhabitants of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, and the Aztecs of Mexico—there is no need to go on. No, do not interrupt me."

He went on to speak of legends and ancient lore with a grimly forbidding earnestness and a persuasiveness which aroused, first, my doubts about their unreality, and at last my unwilling belief. He spoke of certain evil cults which had come down from pre-human eons, surviving in strange, out-of-the-way places, servants of the Ancient Ones—almost inconceivable beings of dread who had fought against the Elder Gods in their far place among the stars of Orion and Taurus, and had been expelled to alien stars and planets—great Cthulhu, waiting in sleep within some fastness which might be the sunken sea kingdom of R'lyeh; Hastur the Unspeakable, come from the lake of Hali in the Hyades; Nyarlathotep, the fearful messenger of the Ancient Ones; Shub-Niggurath, the Goat With a Thousand Young, symbol of fertility; Ithaqua, ruler of the air, akin to the fabled Wendigo; Yog-Sothoth,

the All-in-One and One-in-All, not subject to strictures of time or space, who was greater than all the other Ancient Ones—all dreaming in hidden places of the time when they can rise again against the Elder Gods and once more rule and command Earth and the sister planets and stars of the universe of which Earth is but an infinitesimal part. He spoke of the servants of the Ancient Ones—of the Deep Ones, the Voormis, the Abominable Mi-Go, the Shoggoths, the Shantaks; of the mysteriously unmapped lands as N'Kai, Kadath-in-the-Cold-Waste, Carcosa and Y'ha-nthlei; of the rivalry between Cthulhu and Hastur and their followers. . . .

And yet, somehow, I understood that he withheld more knowledge than he imparted. I listened in growing wonder, increasingly aware that there was about my visitor a strangely disquieting aspect which was evident even above the almost hypnotic compulsion of his voice and manner, the conviction his bearing and his words conveyed, an intuitively-perceived force which lent weight and authority to his quiet recital. I listened, listened without interruption while he mentioned the old books and mouldering papers which contained the clues to the reality behind the legends—the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*, the *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* of Von Junzt, the Comte d'Erlette's *Cultes des Goules*, the *R'lyeh Text*, and finally the fabulously rare *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred.

He had been speaking of these hidden things, drawing upon some arcana of knowledge which was obviously his own because of an impressive amount of research, for some time, when abruptly he cut himself off in the middle of a sentence. He sat motionless, in an attitude of intent listening.

"Ah," he breathed quietly. Then he rose and took the liberty of putting out the light.

"Do you hear, Mr. Colum?"

I strained to listen in the pregnant darkness. Was it my imagi-

nation, or did I hear a curious, shuffling sound, almost an uncertain hopping, moving out of the hall beyond my flat and down the steps?

"They have followed me here," said Professor Shrewsbury. "Come."

He moved to a window overlooking the entrance to the building. I came to his side and together we looked down. Out of the building came not one but two strangely hunched figures, who seemed to shuffle and hop along, and passing under a misty light in the street, revealed oddly repellent features, ichthyic, if I were to judge.

"If I were to say to you," whispered Professor Shrewsbury at my side, "that there went two of the Deep Ones, would you still believe that I was the victim of my own wishful imagination, Mr. Colum?"

"I don't know," I answered, likewise in a whisper.

But I knew that what walked away into a London fog below was something incredibly evil; the aura of it seemed even now to linger in the street.

"How did you know they were here?" I asked suddenly.

"I knew it as well as I know this book"—he picked up a book from my desk, despite the darkness, "or this page of manuscript,"—this, too, he picked up, "or this pen. And even now, we have not been deserted, Mr. Colum, by no means. They have no intention of leaving us to our own devices. Perhaps they suspect my purpose, I do not know."

"And what is your purpose?" I managed to ask, somewhat surprised at his uncanny vision in the darkness of an unfamiliar room.

"I need someone like you to accompany me in a search for the Keeper of the Key. I warn you that the course will be fraught with dangers, not only to the body, but to your very soul—that the in-

structions you will receive are bound to seem mad to you, but yet must be followed to the letter, without question—that we may very well not return.”

I hesitated. His challenge was direct and uncompromising. I did not for a moment doubt his sincerity or integrity. Where would he lead me? I wondered.

“We are bound for the port of Aden, Mr. Colum,” he said. “But perhaps you would like some further evidence of my ability to see and foresee the dangers which beset us. Pray do not be alarmed, Mr. Colum; my powers are small at best, and yet they may be surprising.” He put on the light, and, turning to me, took off his black spectacles.

My shock bordered momentarily on hysteria. The strangled cry that escaped me was lost in a terrified silence, while I fought for self-control. *For Professor Laban Shrewsbury, despite having given me so convincing a demonstration of the excellence of his vision, had no eyes at all; where his eyes should have been there were only the dark pits of his empty sockets!*

Quite calmly, he resumed his spectacles. “I am sorry to have disturbed your equanimity, Mr. Colum,” he said quietly. “But you have not yet given me your answer.”

I tried to match his calmness with my own. “I will go, Professor Shrewsbury.”

“I was certain you would,” he answered. “Now listen carefully—as soon as day breaks, you must undertake to secure your possessions against a long absence. We shall take every precaution against loss, but it is quite probable that you will not return for some time—months, perhaps a year, perhaps more. Does that upset you?”

“No,” I replied, truthfully enough.

“Very good. We shall set out in two days from Southampton. Can you be ready in that time?”

"I believe so."

"Now I must tell you we have strange allies in our quest, Mr. Colum, and even stranger properties in combat." As he spoke, he took from his pocket a little phial of golden mead, which he pressed upon me. "Guard this carefully, for it has the property, taken in the smallest quantity, of extending the range of all your senses and of enabling your astral self to move about independently in your sleep." Next he gave me a small, five-pointed star, which he identified as a kind of amulet which would assure my protection, as long as I carried it on my person, from all such beings as the Deep Ones, though it was powerless against the Ancient Ones themselves.

He went on to add a little stone whistle to the curious things he had already bestowed upon me.

"In many ways, Mr. Colum, this whistle is your most potent weapon. When the time comes that you are in mortal danger, without other escape, if you will take a little of the mead, keep the star-stone in your possession, and blow this whistle, calling forth immediately thereafter these words—*Iä! Iä! Hastur! Hastur cf'ayak 'vulgtumm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!* the Byakhee birds will come and transport you to a place of safety. . . ."

"If the minions of the Ancient Ones are everywhere, what haven is left?" I asked.

"There is one, where we can be safe. And yet we are not there; we are on Celaeno." He smiled tolerantly at my incredulous astonishment. "I do not blame you for thinking me deranged, Mr. Colum. I assure you most solemnly that what I say is the literal truth; Hastur and his minions are not subject to the same laws of time and space which bind us. Their summoning formula is heard, believe me, wherever you may be—and answered."

He paused reflectively and studied my face. "Do you now wish to withdraw, Mr. Colum?"

I shook my head slowly, fascinated against all reason, against my will, against my judgment.

"Can you meet me at Southampton the day after tomorrow? Our ship is the *Princess Ellen*; we set out at nine in the morning."

"I'll be there," I said.

"A sum of money will be deposited to your account before I leave London, Mr. Colum. You will find it sufficient. Pray go on board the *Princess Ellen* even if I am not there; I will join you in good time, and do not be alarmed at my failure to appear, should the hour seem late. Reservations have been made." He hesitated. "And let me impress upon you once more the danger which attends you; believe me, it is never far from you—*they* know, since your book has come out, that you are dangerous to them or may become so."

So saying, he took his departure, and I was left alone with the confusion of my thoughts and the conviction that I stood on the threshold of an adventure stranger than any ever conceived by the mind of man.

2.

The utter monotony of the prosaic world of every day seldom impresses itself upon one until the establishment of a sharp contrast affords a comparative basis. There is, too, the very real danger that one may see and understand that the patina of the mundane which overlays all things is but a mask for the constant struggle which goes on unceasingly between recognizable forces of good and the nebulous, almost incredible evil which lies forever in wait just beyond the rim of awareness, lying in wait not only for the soul of man, but for the world itself, the world and possession of its lands and seas and, beyond that, of the star-spaces and all that lies in the cosmos.

I lay for a long time that night contemplating the things Professor Laban Shrewsbury had said to me, and the even more appalling things at which he had but hinted. The deep hours of night lend themselves well to the eerie, the enchanting, the terrible, but the core of reason, the solid substructure of all the practical knowledge which a man takes in for his first thirty years is not easily set aside by any fund of new and conflicting knowledge. My visitor had been, virtually, little more than a creature of the night; however persuasive his story, I knew nothing of him, though I held in my possession the curious things he had given me.

There were, however, certain avenues of information. My old friend, Henry Pilgore, possessed one of the most comprehensive of reference libraries. Despite the lateness of the hour, I telephoned him, putting in a trunk call to the Somerset village where he lived. He bade me to hang on while he sought out such information as he might have; but I did not have to wait long. Professor Shrewsbury was listed; Pilgore read his biographical sketch—of his home in Arkham, Massachusetts; of his one-time connection with Miskatonic University; of his erratic, post-teaching existence; of his apparently wide travels; of his scholarly work, *An Investigation into the Myth-Patterns of Latter-day Primitives with Especial Reference to the R'lyeh Text*; and finally: "He disappeared in September, 1938. Presumed dead."

Presumed dead. The words rang in my thoughts for a long moment. But I could not doubt that, whatever he might be, my visitor had most assuredly been Professor Laban Shrewsbury. What of the things he had left for me? The mead, he had said, had strange properties.

I opened the phial cautiously, touched a drop of it to my finger, and tasted it. It was flat to sweet, ambrosial on second taste, but it gave me no sensation at all, not even one akin to the mild stimulation of weak wine. Disappointed, I replaced the phial, and sat

down once more in the darkness of my room. Far away, Big Ben struck two o'clock in the morning; I had but one more day in London, scarcely that, if I meant to be at Southampton docks by nine o'clock of the day following. But now doubts began to assail me; I began to doubt the wisdom of my decision; I began to consider my commitment folly—

And then I became aware of a subtle alteration in my sensory experience. I was slowly becoming cognizant of a greatly heightened perception on all planes; sounds common to the street outside were clearly heard and accurately interpreted; the smells, the odors and perfumes of the night infiltrating my quarters were made vastly stronger; but at the same time I experienced an even more significant quality of the mead of which I had partaken—my intuitive perception was increased beyond the bounds of what I might have considered possible, increased to such an extent that I became keenly aware of the hidden watchers posted not only in the building, but in the street, and even hundreds of yards away.

For they were there. I cannot say by what marvellous property of the mead I was enabled to see as clearly as if they stood before me the evilly batrachian and ichthyic features of those oddly repellent creatures in the guise of men; but see them I did. And I knew at that moment that everything my visitor had told me was true beyond question, no matter how fantastic his words had sounded. And this realization was fraught with the coldest and most soul-shaking terror, for the limitless vistas of ancient and potent horror, the alien concepts, the monstrous beings which were implicit in the hidden word of Professor Shrewsbury's revelation were paralyzing to mankind.

What happened then is incapable of any logical or scientific explanation.

I passed over into a sleeping state during which I had a most vivid dream, in which I saw myself packing my belongings for the

impending voyage, writing a letter to my publisher to explain that I would be away from London for several months, instructing my brother by letter also to handle such affairs of mine as needed care during my absence, and finally slipping away from my quarters in a patent and successful effort to elude my followers. Furthermore, I made my way speedily to Waterloo Station, once I had complied with the formalities incidental to travelling abroad, and entrained for Southampton, where I presently found myself at the docks and on board the *Princess Ellen*, though not without a further frightening shock at the realization that, though I had eluded my London pursuers, I had other, similar watchers following me in Southampton.

Now all this, I say, was a dream of the most vivid sort, wholly unlike any dream which I had ever previously experienced. It was so real, in fact, that it seemed to me that the figure in the chair was the dream, and the dream the reality. Or could both have been? I remembered later Professor Shrewsbury's comment about the strange properties of the golden mead, which was certainly, I am now convinced, no invention of man's, properties never conceived by mankind but brought from some far place, even perhaps, from out of this world, from the hidden places in the cosmos where the Ancient Ones still lurk, waiting forever to return to the paradise from which they were cast out eons ago.

For I woke up not in my familiar Soho quarters, but in my cabin on board the *Princess Ellen*, with Professor Shrewsbury beside me. By what outré powers he possessed behind his formidable black spectacles, he divined the reason for my amazement.

"I see you have sampled the mead, Mr. Colum," he said quietly. He was not angry. "You will then have some appreciation of its properties."

"It was not a dream then?"

He shook his head. "Whatever it was you dreamed was quite

true. The mead enabled part of you to separate from its counterpart; you were thus empowered to see yourself doing what you must do in order to fulfil your commitment. Perhaps it was as well that you did try the mead; it gave you the means to understand how closely, indeed, you were being watched and followed, and it lent you furthermore the wit to elude your pursuers. But we shall not be long without pursuit, you may be sure of that."

He waited until I had collected myself somewhat, adjusting to the situation in which I so surprisingly now found myself. Then he continued.

"We are bound for the port of Aden in Arabia, as I told you two nights ago. From Aden we will strike inward either toward the site of ancient Timna, which you may remember from Pliny, who referred to it as the 'city of forty temples'—of what nature, some of them, we may well wonder, or to the region around Salalah, the summer capital of the sultan of Muscat and Oman, in search of a fabulous subterranean city, a buried city, which has been designated as the 'Nameless City' by more than one authority. These are the areas once inhabited by the Hymarites, twenty to thirty centuries ago. In these vicinities we are likely to find the almost legendary Irem, the City of Pillars, which was seen by the Arab, Abdul Alhazred, during his sojourn in the great southern desert, the Roba El Khaliyey or 'Empty Space' of the ancients, which is also the 'Dahna' or 'Crimson Desert' of the modern Arabs, and held to be inhabited by protective evil spirits and death-dealing monsters. You will find it increasingly significant that we repeatedly encounter these so-called 'legends' of evil spirits and monsters, particularly since they are curiously corroborative of the central theses of the Cthulhu myth-pattern, wherever we go and in whatever directions we reach. You will ultimately conclude, even as I did long ago, that this is not coincidence."

I assured him that I had already come to a surprisingly great degree of belief in the astonishing things he had striven to impart to

me; manifestly, full belief depended upon such further examination as might be possible for me to make, though I had considerable apprehension as to what the future might hold in store for me.

He went on now to speak of the work of the Arab, Abdul Alhazred, the book *Al Azif*, which had become the *Necronomicon*. None other had ever come so close to revealing the secrets of Cthulhu and the cults of Cthulhu, of Yog-Sothoth, and indeed, of all the Ancient Ones; the book, originally secretly circulated after Alhazred's mysterious disappearance and subsequent death in 731 A.D., hinted of things so terrible that the mind of man could scarcely conceive of them, and, conceiving, would instantly elect to reject them rather than adopt into the realm of the possible any potential event of such a nature as to refute many of the most fundamental principles by which the races of mankind exist, and relegate man to a position of even greater insignificance than his present mote-like place in the cosmos. The work, moreover, was of such a nature that all ecclesiastical authorities, regardless of affiliation, condemned it and had so successfully fought the spread by the most rigid suppression that only a very few copies of the Greek and Latin versions of the text were to be had, and these few copies were all under lock and key in various institutions—the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the British Museum, the library of the University of Buenos Aires, the Widener Library of Harvard, the library of Miskatonic University at Arkham. The Arabic original was lost centuries ago, at about 1228, when Olaus Wormius made his Latin translation of the book.

Professor Shrewsbury had read the entire work in both the Latin and the Greek versions, and he hoped to discover somewhere in Arabia a copy of the Arabic, if not, indeed, the original manuscript, which, he held, had not disappeared but had rather remained in Alhazred's possession, a copy which had been used by Wormius having vanished instead. This was conjecture on the

professor's part, but there were sound reasons for such a conclusion, and it began to dawn upon me that possession of this priceless manuscript was doubtless the immediate goal behind the expedition to Arabia. That there was something more lying in the back of Professor Shrewsbury's mind I could not doubt; and of this he was clearly unwilling to speak, for he gave no hint of its nature. Indeed, it was borne in upon me presently that, however open and above-board Professor Shrewsbury was, there was much left to be desired in his palimpsest of information regarding the Cthulhu Mythos and such adjunctive data as he chose to speak about. What he sought, he confidently expected to find either in Irem or the unidentified "Nameless City," which might be identical with cities at either the site of Timna or Salalah.

At this point he offered me typescripts of certain portions of the *Necronomicon*, and sat waiting patiently while I read, skimming hastily the various papers he had handed me, but reading enough, nevertheless, to understand the significance of the portions he had had transcribed.

Whosoever speaketh of Cthulhu shall remember that he but seemeth dead; he sleeps, and yet he does not sleep; he has died, and yet he is not dead; asleep and dead though he is, he shall rise again. Again, it should be shown that

That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange eons even death may die.

And more . . .

Great Cthulhu shall rise from R'lyeh, Hastur the Unspeakable shall return from the dark star which is in the Hyades near Aldebaran, the red eye of the bull, Nyarlathotep shall howl forever in the darkness where he abideth, Shub-Niggurath shall spawn its thousand young, and they shall spawn in turn and take dominion over all wood nymphs, satyrs, leprechauns, and the Little People, Lloigor, Zhar, and Ithaqua shall ride the spaces among the stars. . .

And yet more . . .

He who hath the five-pointed stone shall find himself able to command all beings which creep, swim, crawl, walk, or fly even to the source from which there is no returning. . . .

There was far more—oddly disturbing paragraphs concerning the return of the Ancient Ones, the devotion of the minions who served them, some in the guise of men, others in guises far stranger. There were yet more names reaching out from these pages to transfix with primal fear—Ubbo-Sathla, Azathoth, the blind idiot god, 'Umr At-Tawil, Tsathoggua, Cthugha, and yet others, all suggestive of a weird and horrible godhead, of a terror-fraught panoply of great, gigantic creatures, in no wise similar to man, as ancient as and quite possibly more ancient than earth itself, or even the solar system so familiar to the astronomers of our time. Indeed, after I had read some of the pages he gave me, I had little wish to read on, I begged tiredness as an excuse, and handed them back to him.

My companion thereupon bade me to sleep, while he, who apparently had no need of sleep went on with certain preparations he had yet to make. But before I slept, he took me up on deck, and walked to the rail with me, bidding me only to look about me and observe the water closely. We were not alone in our course, for a school of large fish, which I at first hazarded were porpoises, showed now and then about the ship; but at my mention of porpoises, Professor Shrewsbury only smiled sardonically, and said nothing. It came to me on the edge of sleep soon after that we were not likely to encounter a school of porpoises so little a way out of Southampton; and I knew then, I think, what it was that swam so furtively about the *Princess Ellen*, even if I was reluctant to admit it to myself at first.

And when I slept, I dreamed.

But this time the dreams were of a different calibre from the

remarkable waking dream inspired by the golden mead—a curious dream pattern of dreadful and horrible beings, of the Deep Ones who could follow on land or in the water, of great, bat-winged creatures flying overhead, of something amorphous and awe-inspiring which lurked deep down in the sea, of vast, sunken continents, of lost, buried cities, ancient as the drifting sand, concealing something of great value in our need, a dream of flight and pursuit, and of an inevitable ending in which there was no escape from the ever more frightful creatures who kept so doggedly upon our trail.

3.

I pass over the remainder of our trip, which was relatively uneventful. True, there was never a day when there was not to be seen something in the sea—a strangely humped back which was not as ichthyic as one would have liked, a shuddersome webbed foot which was horribly like a human hand with its fingers webbed, a terrifying glimpse of a face half human, half batrachian, with gleaming basilisk eyes, and a frightful travesty of a mouth slashed across its leatherlike skin—but these were only the slightest, most momentary glimpses, and it was difficult to tell how much was actually seen, and how much was imagined out of the strange facts I had confronted. And, since the ship kept serenely on its course, the other passengers gave no sign of having seen anything untoward, it was easy to conclude that what I did see, however disquieting, was grown in large part from a perfervid imagination which, in the circumstances, was understandable enough.

Likewise, our disembarking at Aden was without incident. It was not Professor Shrewsbury's intention to remain in the port

city, for, as he explained, the Deep Ones could find us as readily in a port city as on the sea, but were loath to venture far inland, away from water, since this was a necessary element for them, and, while they could sustain themselves for some time without water, a trek into desert country was not an undertaking destined to appeal to them.

"Nevertheless," said the professor with the utmost casualness, "we must expect that other followers will soon be in our vicinity, and we must be prepared for any eventuality."

Guides and porters for our expedition had been arranged for by cable and waited for us farther up the coast, at Damqut. Once we had reached Damqut some days later, it took but a few hours to have all in readiness for our departure. Several times, Professor Shrewsbury examined the streets and alleys of Damqut in the vicinity with marked anxiety, but at last, convinced that there were nearby none other than certain suspicious individuals who might have belonged to the Deep Ones, and who could not harm any possessor of the five-pointed stone, he gave the signal to begin moving from the city.

Our goal was the great unexplored waste of the Rub al 'Khali—Alhazred's "Roba El Khaliye." We were to make first for Salalah, and from there intended to strike northward toward other potential sites of the Nameless City mentioned by Abdul Alhazred. That my employer had certain definite ideas about the site of the Nameless City, I could not doubt; but he revealed nothing; so we set out, just precisely as many other expeditions had set out before us, by camel caravan, though there had been one period of hesitation during which Professor Shrewsbury had contemplated making an earlier trip to Mareb by air. But, since this would not allow for any divagations from the main line of travel, he discarded the tentative plan.

Of the trip across the desert, from Damqut to Salalah and be-

yond, I know not what to write. Certainly, the events of that expedition could have been coincidental in their happening; I say they *could* have, but in the light of our purpose, and in that of the intentions of those little-known creatures who sought to prevent our reaching our goal, I do not think they were. On our first night in the desert, we lost one of our guides. Both my employer and I followed his tracks away from camp—he had been running, but his tracks had ceased suddenly; he had literally vanished into the air, leaving no trace of his going. No one had observed him rising from his place in the night. Our second night was uneventful; on our third we lost a porter. This time Professor Shrewsbury and I found the poor fellow's body; we had fanned out beyond the place at which his footsteps stopped, and we found the body almost concealed in sand. A hasty examination showed that he would seem to have been dropped from a singular height, for many of his bones were savagely broken.

We said nothing of his death to the rest of the party, though his disappearance, added to the guide's, spread uneasiness among the men. Desertions were not at all uncommon; the guide's vanishing had been accepted as a desertion, without question; the porter's had taken place too far from Damqut, and yet we were still on well-travelled roads, and the theory that he had deserted satisfied some of the men. But the uneasiness which had taken root among them was by no means confined to them, nor was it alone due to the loss of two of their number. I myself had felt it; a succession of events quite apart from the disappearance of the two men stirred it beyond my ability to suppress it.

The most curious event was not, in final analysis, the vanishing of our men. It was the intolerable conviction of being watched by invisible watchers. This was naturally most strong at night, but we were never without it even under the glaring sun, and by day it was accompanied by strange hallucinations, reported by guides

and porters alike—of slithering creatures, resembling crocodiles, darting about at a little distance from our caravan, and manifestly following us. These could very easily have been desert animals, which could have grown into the habit of following caravans, except for the fact that they were not identifiable as native animals of any kind, they were of varying size, some of them but a few inches long, some many feet in length, and pronouncedly reptilian, and, finally, that some of them appeared to be garbed in unrecognizable costumes, sight of which only served to further excite the members of our caravan.

These strange creatures would seem to have been at least half unreal, for they appeared and disappeared with such agility that more than once they seemed to vanish before our eyes. They were very probably not malign; none ever approached too closely to the camp or caravan, and all vanished at once on movement toward them. Professor Shrewsbury shot at them several times, but with astonishingly ill effect; he struck none of them, though there were times when he could hardly have missed. Yet he did. Their following had an unusual effect on my employer; far from becoming uneasy at their presence, he seemed actually to enjoy having them near us, and plagued the men constantly as to their numbers, had they noticed any increase, and the like.

We were perhaps seventeen days out of Damqut, and already well past Salalah before any increase in the numbers of our unusual companions was reported. By that time we had lost in all six men, and those who remained were becoming extremely restive. This was not alone because of the dwindling number of the men on the expedition, but because, as their spokesman pointed out, we approached a forbidden and accursed region of the country, one which all Arabians shunned in mortal fear.

My employer, however, was blind to any appeal. He confided that he had expected rebellion, and that this in itself was an excel-

lent sign, for the writings of Abdul Alhazred were specific in that the region of the Nameless City was shunned by the natives. His adamance before the entreaty of the men that he alter his course was strengthened by the occurrence of an even more significant event, though its significance was lost on me at first.

It was late that night when my employer woke me. He was unusually excited.

"Come," he whispered.

I went with him, wonderingly.

He knelt down just outside the tent and held his hand, palm down, above the surface of the sand.

"Feel," he commanded.

I did so, and was aware, as I had already been aware about my ankles, of the movement of an ice-cold current of air flowing steadily across the surface of the sand.

"Do you feel it?" he asked.

"The wind? Yes. What is it?"

"Alhazred's 'spectral wind.' There is an account of it in the *Necronomicon*. There is yet another in the writings of the late H. P. Lovecraft. Both pertain to the same source—the Nameless City. From which direction does it come?"

"Almost due north."

"That will be our route tomorrow. We will not feel the wind by day, but at night we will know it again. If we follow it, it will lead us to our goal. Then our real work begins, Mr. Colum—only then. And I am very much afraid that you and I will be quite alone at it; so it will behoove us to make sure of our camels and such supplies as are absolutely essential to the two of us for the trip back to Salalah."

We turned away from the direction of the border of Oman next morning, and struck out toward the heart of the Rub al 'Khali. There was much muttering among the men; many dark scowls

came out upon their faces and remained there throughout the day. But they were still with us by nightfall, whatever their fears. Too, there were with us an increasing number of our strange desert companions, but these showed a curious aversion to the oasis at which we encamped for the night.

Once again, in the night, my employer sought the "spectral wind" and found it, much stronger now, with sufficient velocity to ripple our tents. But he and I were not the only members of the party to be aware of it. In a very short time after it had begun to blow, which was not long after sundown, the men had become cognizant of it, and, feeling it, they gave vent to such a bedlam of complaint, that Professor Shrewsbury was compelled to talk to them, which he did in Arabic, explaining to me later what it was that had passed between them.

"We cannot go on," the leader of the men had said.

"Why not?"

"Feel. It is the death wind."

"I feel it. Will you remain here while Mr. Colum and I go on?"

The leader consulted the men, who were divided in their opinions. Nevertheless, he believed that the majority of them would stay.

"Very well." Professor Shrewsbury turned to me. "We'll take that special equipment I have, lash it securely to a camel, and make our own camels ready. You and I will go on now; the wind began approximately two hours after sundown, travelling much faster than you or I can travel. Nevertheless, if we make haste, we should reach its source before dawn, for it will return the way it came."

Within an hour we were moving through the limitless desert, into the wind out of the north. We travelled as speedily as our camels allowed us to, Professor Shrewsbury completely confident of reaching his goal at or before dawn. The night was not hot, but

the wind into which we rode was an Arctic wind, utterly alien to the desert, and redolent with unfamiliar odors and fragrances. Stars were myriad in the heavens; small wonder that Arabs were among the earliest known astronomers! Yet I could not help wondering, looking up at them, whether indeed there lay in those star-spaces the colossal beings of the mythology about which my employer had spoken—the Elder Gods, the Ancient Ones, whose very struggle did indeed parallel the ancient legends of mankind, even before the setting down of the banishment from heaven of Satan and his followers.

Shortly after midnight, the wind changed its course. It was indeed returning, even as Professor Shrewsbury had predicted it would, for now it swept northward, rapidly gaining momentum and force. Nor did it diminish in velocity until just before dawn, when there occurred a perceptible slackening of its vigor. By this time I was exceedingly tired, but Professor Shrewsbury urged his camel onward, confident that the site of the Nameless City lay not far ahead.

Nor was his confidence misplaced, for shortly before the oddly cold wind died away, he gave a shout and pointed ahead to what seemed to be a solitary stone in the expanse of sand over which the sun was soon to rise blazingly. I could have known by the electrifying aura of malignancy which had descended upon me that we had come at last to the goal which Professor Shrewsbury had sought; here indeed was a hidden city, and the occasional stones which were revealed so fleetingly by the shifting sands, spoke somberly of a civilization ancient before the Christian era had begun.

I wondered how my employer hoped to descend into this hidden city. He had certainly no chance whatsoever of penetrating to its street level by means of the picks and shovels we had brought; for manifestly the city was buried too deeply. But this

problem concerned me only briefly, for Professor Shrewsbury made no effort to dismount; instead, he followed the now fast failing wind, urging his camel anxiously forward, until he outdistanced me, leaving me still threading my way among the pinnacles of that buried ruin. When at last he dismounted, he was considerably ahead of me; I found him beside a cavernous opening, skillfully hidden among the sands.

As I too dismounted, the last of the wind died away, hushing around my feet into the opening, which led down sand-covered steps. Out of it yawned an obliterating blackness, and from it rose a coolness which spoke of moisture below. But Professor Shrewsbury was already unloading the third camel, which had been tied to my own and had hindered my keeping up with my employer.

"Is this the place?" I asked.

"This is the place," he answered confidently. "I know, because I have been here."

I gazed at him in perplexity. "But why, then, this search?" I asked.

"Because I have never come over land, but only by air. Come, let me show you."

He led the way down the steps. From the desert, which was already extremely hot in the rays of the rising sun, to this cool cavernous place was a step as from tropical to sub-Arctic regions; moreover, the air grew even cooler and more damp as we descended, and it was borne in upon me presently that, once the initial sequence of stone steps had been descended, we were in a kind of natural cavern, which lay, because of the steep, staired declivities over which we passed, far deeper beneath the sands than we might otherwise have imagined. Perhaps at some time it had been crowned by a superstructure, long since destroyed; but now it shone and glowed eerily in the beams of my employer's flashlight.

I was struck almost at once by the evidence all around us of the

ancient civilization which had once held sway here. Though many side passages led into the various rooms of the central cavern, all were far too low to permit of a man's standing upright; but wherever altars occurred—and it was patent that the cavern had been used as a temple—they were suggestively low, as were they made for creatures which crawled rather than walked upright. The stone roof of the cavern had been worked on by stonecutters; and primitive artists had decorated the walls, which were filled with the most horribly disquieting drawings, depicting not man but the events of a history in which none but saurian and reptilian creatures took part—the very same, I concluded with disturbing reluctance, as those crocodile-like beings which had watched the approach of our caravan from afar and accompanied us to the oasis where the remainder of our expedition still waited.

My employer, however, appeared to have a further goal in view, for he walked rapidly from room to room in the cavern until he came to the end, and there he went around the altar and disclosed a stone door carved from the rock of the wall. This he opened with ease, revealing yet another flight of steps, a steep declivity leading down into hideously repellent depths, from which rose a kind of foetor not unpleasantly spiced with odors suggestive of incense. Without hesitation, Professor Shrewsbury plunged into the gloom of that endless passage—for indeed, it was endless; our descent took over two hours, for the passage altered height, so that it was necessary from time to time to walk with the utmost care. We descended from level to level, until it seemed to me that we must indeed be inconceivably far below the surface of the earth at that place.

Yet at last we reached a level floor, at first in a place where neither of us could quite stand upright, but presently, by dint of shuffling along, through a widening corridor in which, much to my astonishment, there were wooden cases with fronts of a sub-

stance akin to glass and yet not glass—but these were clearly cases which had never known the hand of man, artful in construction, coffin-like in size, and affixed to the walls and along the floor of the passage. My employer went from one to another of them, eagerly, and at last stopped before one of them with a long, low sigh.

He turned his flashlight full upon it and beckoned me forward.

"Do not be surprised at what you see, Mr. Colum," he cautioned me.

I do not know what I expected to see, but what I did see could hardly have been any more startling. For certainly the last thing I expected to see beneath the pseudo-glass of the case was the body of a young man of my own time, surely of approximately my own age, and, if his clothing were any criterion, either an Englishman or an American, with the balance in favor of the latter.

"Is this, too, a dream or an illusion?" I cried.

"No, Mr. Colum, it is not," answered Professor Shrewsbury. "Nor is this one—nor this."

"Good God! Three of them. How did these corpses come here?"

"Ah, they are not corpses."

"But they are surely not alive!"

"Pray remember Alhazred's inexplicable couplet—'That is not dead which can eternal lie, And with strange aeons even death may die.' No, they are not dead; but, paradoxical as it may seem, they are not alive either. They are deposited here to wait for that time when their life essence, their souls, their astrals—name it what you will—are brought back. For this is the secret of the Byak-hee birds; they do not fly to Celaeno, but here, to this domain of Hastur, where the bodies of these young men are thus preserved. Soon now they themselves will return from Celaeno, and together all of us will make the final journey of this incredible search which has now come to the threshold of the secret."

I thought of what he had said, recalling his words about the Byakhee and their response to the stone whistle I carried in my pocket. But where, then, were they? I put my question into words.

"Some of them may be here. But they are in Kadath-in-the-Cold-Waste, on the shunned Plateau of Leng, and in certain other places, some within our own plane, some existing conterminously on another plane."

"And who are these young men?"

"The first one is Andrew Phelan; he helped me in Arkham. The second is Abel Keane; he, too, was helpful—at Innsmouth. The third is Claiborne Boyd, who undertook a strange mission to Peru."

"And the fourth will be Nayland Colum," I cried.

"Let us hope not," said my employer fervently. "If we succeed here, it should no longer be necessary to take such means to escape pursuit."

"You knew they were here," I charged. "How?"

"Because I, too, was one of them for a while—and even before any of them came here, I spent almost twenty years in such a case. I am far older than you would believe, Mr. Colum—if we add those two decades." He turned away. "But it is not our purpose to linger here. We must go on, yet farther. There are crypts below into which I have never seen."

He paused only long enough to add to my burdens a share of his own, which were becoming too heavy for him; then he went on, and again we descended narrow stone steps, again we crouched and crawled through narrower passages, moving from one level to another. How far we went into the bowels of the earth, I have no way of knowing; by the light on my watch, I saw that the hour was already well past noon, though I felt, strangely, neither hunger nor thirst.

Far down, near the end of the passage, the walls revealed arresting paintings of the utmost and most extravagant grotesquerie.

Here there were set down a sequence of scenes which must have depicted the Nameless City in its distant past, though it seemed most peculiar that the scenes of the city were consistently done as by moonlight, so that they were elusively spectral in their effect. A scrutiny of the pictures, however, revealed a secret, hidden world, subterranean beyond question, where great cities flourished amidst high mountains and fertile valleys; this country existed side by side with the moonlit monoliths of the Nameless City, shown now in decadence, with the sacred reptiles dying away, and their spirits hovering above, while ornately robed priests cursed the waters and the air. One terrible final scene showed an emaciated group of the saurian inhabitants of the Nameless City setting upon and tearing apart a human being. Beyond this point, however, the grey walls and ceiling were devoid of all ornamentation, for which I was understandably grateful.

We came at last to a great bronze door upon which was set an inscription in Arabic, which my employer translated aloud: "He who came, hath returned. He who saw, hath been blinded. He who set down the secrets, hath been silenced. Here he shall abide forever, neither in darkness nor the light. Let none disturb him." He turned to me, his excitement obvious even in the darkness of the room. "Can it be other than the Arab Alhazred?" he demanded. "For he alone came, saw, and set down the secrets."

"He was killed."

"Tortured and slain, beyond question," agreed Professor Shrewsbury calmly. "Legend has it that he was snatched by an invisible monster in broad daylight and devoured horribly before a great audience; this is the story the twelfth century biographer, Ebn Khallikan, hands down; but it is more than possible that the devouring was an illusion and that he was brought here to undergo punishment and death for his temerity in revealing the secrets of the Ancient Ones. Come, we are going in."

The bronze door resisted our efforts for some time, but at last it

gave, opening into a small, square room, which was barren of all furnishing with the exception of a squat stone sarcophagus in the center of the room. Professor Shrewsbury advanced upon this without hesitation and moved back the lid, disclosing tattered remnants of clothing, a few fragments of bone, and dust.

"Is it he?" I asked.

My employer nodded.

"And we have come all this way for this?"

"Not alone this, Mr. Colum. Be patient. What follows now informs us whether we succeed or fail. Tell me, you still have the mead?"

"Yes."

"Take but a little of it."

I followed his example.

"And now pray compose yourself. He will need to draw upon you for his coming."

Drowsiness was already coming upon me. Under Professor Shrewsbury's guidance, I stretched out on the floor near the sarcophagus, and almost immediately experienced a dream similar in character to that first mead-inspired dream in my Soho quarters. Once again I saw myself taking part in a drama, this time far more outré than that other, which had been prosaic enough in essence.

I watched Professor Shrewsbury encircle the sarcophagus and both of us with a large band of blue powder, which he immediately set afire. This burned eerily but brightly, so that the entire room was illumined, and the sarcophagus stood out in high relief. My employer then constructed a series of cabalistic designs on the floor about the sarcophagus, again completely encircling it. Thereafter he took from his person certain documents which resembled those transcriptions from the *Necronomicon* he had given me to read, and from one of them he recited in a clear voice.

"Him who knows the place of R'lyeh;
him who holds the secret of far Kadath;
him who keeps the key to Cthulhu;
by the five-pointed star, by the sign of Kish, by the assent of
the Elder Gods, let him come forth."

This he recited three times, at each adjuration completing a drawing on the floor. At the conclusion of his recitation, he waited. Now there occurred a most unusual and slightly disturbing phenomenon. I felt myself surrendering something of myself, as were I drained of my very life-force, and at the same time there was a movement above the sarcophagus, at first little more than a stirring of air, then a gradual misting, and then before my eyes the remnants and tatters of clothing in the sarcophagus began to lift up into the air and take ragged shape about the misting which was growing steadily denser, losing its opacity for darkness, so that presently there hung above the sarcophagus a spectral image, a blasphemous caricature of a man, which had neither body nor face, but only a semblance of each, with black, glowing pits where eyes should have been beneath a torn burnous and a dark shapeless body, very thin, upon which the tatters of garments which long ago were flowing robes hung loosely. This terrifying apparition hung in the air, motionless.

Professor Shrewsbury addressed it. "Abdul Alhazred, where is Cthulhu?"

The spectre raised a sleeve and indicated its mouth. There was no tongue; it could not speak.

Professor Shrewsbury was not daunted. "Is he at R'lyeh?" And, receiving no immediate answer, he mouthed these unintelligible words: "*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagen*," which, I understood later, was a ritual phrase meaning, "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming."

This time, however, the apparition nodded just perceptibly.

"Where is R'lyeh?"

Once again the horrible revenant of Abdul Alhazred pointed to its tongueless mouth.

"Construct a chart on the ceiling," directed Professor Shrewsbury.

The apparition thereupon went through the motions of drawing a meticulously conceived chart upon the ceiling. Since it had nothing with which to draw, it could not make a mark of any kind; yet, so potent was the effect of the mead, it was manifest that Professor Shrewsbury followed the labored movements with ease, copying them on a piece of paper as the spectre drew them.

There emerged presently a complicated map which represented no known portion of the earth, but I understood, as my employer did, that Abdul Alhazred's conception of the earth was perhaps vastly different from our own, and that his reconstruction of any portion of the earth's surface was dependent upon the limited knowledge of his time, to which he might have added such private knowledge as he had amassed through methods which had gained him sufficient information to enable him to put together the *Al Azif*.

Having finished his drawing, Professor Shrewsbury held it up before the apparition he had summoned from the gulf.

"This is the place?"

The apparition nodded.

"And of these islands, which is the one above R'lyeh?"

The spectre indicated a tiny dot on my employer's map, then made a cryptic gesture which Professor Shrewsbury immediately understood.

"Ah, it sinks and returns."

The spectre once again inclined its head.

Professor Shrewsbury was manifestly now satisfied with this interrogation, and he now turned to the subject which I had felt all along lay in the back of his mind.

"Tell me, Alhazred, where is the lost *Al Azif*?"

There was no immediate reply to the professor's query; the apparition remained motionless for several seconds; then its head made a slow half-turn, which might have been a negative gesture or simply an attempt to see something invisible to other eyes.

"Is it in this room?" pressed my employer.

The spectre nodded.

"Is it in the sarcophagus?"

The spectre shook its head.

The professor glanced rapidly around. There was no place of concealment save in the walls or floor.

"The walls?" he hazarded.

Again his guess was confirmed.

"On the south?"

No.

"On the north?"

No.

"The east?"

Yes. But now the apparition seemed to be trying to say something more in its eerie fashion; the pathetic, tongueless figure, eyeless, too, for eyes and tongue had been removed before death in the torture inflicted upon the mad Arab for his temerity in writing about the secrets of the Ancient Ones and their minions, appeared to wish grievously to say something of significance.

The professor, seeing, tried to draw it out. Was it about the manuscript? A quick nod. Was the manuscript guarded? Yes. Were the guards here? No. Were they below? Yes. That was all? No, there was yet more. The manuscript was not complete? Yes, that was it. Some of it had been destroyed before Alhazred could conceal it? Yes.

"I will take what is left," said the professor. "Return now whence you came, Abdul Alhazred."

Immediately the tatters and the bone fragments fell together and collapsed; the mist settled like dust and vanished; the blue fires around the sarcophagus began to dim and die away. At the same time strength flowed back into me, the professor rose from his knees, to which he had descended to copy that fantastic drawing constructed in the air against the ceiling, and closed the sarcophagus.

Then he strode to my side and shook me.

"Hurry now, Mr. Colum," he whispered. "We have what we want; there is no time to be lost."

We began then to examine the east wall of the room for the stone concealing the fragments of the manuscript of the *Al Azif*. It would be low, the professor reasoned, for the Arab would unquestionably have been bound or chained in some manner, and his ability to reach far up along the wall would have been curtailed. My employer worked with feverish haste, pausing from time to time to listen, so that it seemed we were examining the great stones for a long time before we came upon one loose enough to serve as a place of concealment. Yet we had not been long, and behind the stone we found the parchment pages of the *Al Azif*; these Professor Shrewsbury hastily thrust into his coat. Then we replaced the stone, and together left the room, closing the great bronze door behind us.

For a moment more, Professor Shrewsbury stood at the threshold listening, his head cocked a little toward the stygian darkness at our right, the great maw of blackness which hinted of still further mystery beyond the place to which we had come.

It was then that the sound began. Hitherto, the only noise which had reached our ears was the thin scuttering of sand borne along on the wind at the steps leading down from the desert above; but this had ceased soon after our advance into the nether regions, and we ourselves were then the authors of the only sounds, pertinent to our descent, which we heard. But now, ema-

nating from some dread crypt even farther below, there swelled and grew a sound which can only be described as a low moaning, accompanied by a rushing as of a night wind—a moaning as of many voices, but, what was most hideously suggestive, the voices had a totally non-human quality impossible to describe, save only as a sound fraught with the uttermost horror.

I saw by my watch that the hour of sundown was near, and felt at the same time the beginning once again of the "spectral wind," which manifestly came from far deeper than the subterranean caverns into which we had penetrated. I felt an overpowering urge to take flight and yielded to it; but Professor Shrewsbury soon caught hold of me and stopped my precipitous escape.

"Wait," he urged, "we cannot outrun it. With the stones we are safe. Let us take refuge in a side passage until the worst of the wind has exhausted itself."

We accordingly crawled into one of the low auxiliary passages leading off from the main corridor, and lay there in silence, with our flashlights turned off. There was soon apparent in the corridor which we had left a kind of grey illumination, not light, but a kind of emanation from the walls, so that it was possible to descry the farther wall, and to make out other passages leading away from the central corridor. Then the wind came; it came in a furious blast, accompanied by a mounting bedlam of voices, which sounded like a distant outcry of screams and curses, of ululations and agonized wails, riding the wind. And, as I stared fixedly outward, it seemed to me that the wind itself bore along with it countless faces, saurian, reptilian, batrachian, all bewailing their bondage to the crypts below the Nameless City; they flowed past in a never-ending stream, their brute mouths open in their outcry against this fate which doomed them forever to ride the terrible spectre wind, whose Arctic temperature penetrated to where we lay and chilled to the bone.

Whence came they? From what vast, underground reaches did

the wind rise to sweep forth nightly upon its round over the desert places which few human feet ever trod? And by what accursed sorcery were they so bound to this inferno of darkness? Was it indeed that the drawings on the walls told in truth of the decay and ending of that ancient civilization which had stood long before the time of man, and that there was somewhere still deeper in this earth such a subterrene paradise as that depicted on the walls—a paradise in which there was light as of sunlight, and in which the gardens and valleys were fertile beyond the dreams of men who walked upon the desert above? Or was it that this paradise had in its turn fallen before the invaders who had conquered the Nameless City, the minions of some hellish being perhaps worshipped, perhaps unknown among the dwellers of that place?

The wind's icy fury, added to the cacophony of the terrible voices, made a shocking clamor in this enclosed place; it rang deafeningly, so that I had perforce to clap my hands over my ears lest I suffer the bursting of my ear-drums. Professor Shrewsbury did likewise, and together we lay so for half an hour or perhaps more, before the shrieking blast of the wind had passed beyond our place of concealment, leaving only a steady, unhurried flowing of cold air moving to the surface above.

"Now," said my employer. "But be careful. I could not say what guardians may have been placed at the tomb of Alhazred."

The ascent to the desert place where the shifting sands hid the face of the Nameless City was interminable. From time to time, my employer stopped and turned his sightless eyes back to face that darkness with his own. Now and then I thought, I could not be sure, that I heard scuffling sounds, as of hidden pursuers, but Professor Shrewsbury said nothing, only hurrying faster to mount the precipitous stairs toward the uncertain haven of the starlit desert far overhead. The caverns and corridors rang with our foot-

steps, the icy wind whipped around our ankles, the dwindling voices still sounded with a ghost-like insistence from far ahead of us, from out on the desert where they scattered and were diminished over the sands before being drawn in once more and consigned again to that waiting place deep down below.

There was soon no doubt but that there were pursuers behind us, but of their nature I had no conception. My employer did not seem unduly disturbed, but I observed that he urged me to hasten and himself forged ahead with increased haste, murmuring that our camels might have been frightened by the wind and gone off, that our guides and porters would most certainly have begun to despair of us, for it was now the second night since our departure from the camp at the oasis where first we had become aware of the wind. By this time, too, I was unbelievably weary and exhausted, not having slept for more than forty hours, and feeling the need acutely, because I could no longer seem to distinguish between the reality all around me and the illusion of sights and sounds into which I found myself falling with increasing frequency.

But at last we reached the surface, and, though our camels were not immediately to be seen, they were not far away. They had evidently taken fright at the voice of the wind, and had moved away from the mouth of the pit, from which a little whirlpool of sand still came in the wind, and out of which, doubtless, at the height of the blast from below, a veritable sandstorm must have risen. My employer seemed now possessed of an almost unseemly haste; he leapt upon his camel as soon as the beast had knelt for him, and urged the creature forward with brisk commands. The course we had to follow was clearly indicated by the direction of the wind, which was certain to lead us to the oasis below the Nameless City, even as it had led us on the previous night to the site of the city itself.

As before, the night was dark; the glittering stars were partially hidden by clouds which rode high over; the desert shone with a kind of macabre glowing, as from some dark inner light which had only a spectral reality; and there was no sound beyond the sounds our camels made and the hushing of the wind, now a steady movement to the south. From time to time, Professor Shrewsbury cast glances backward, but if he saw anything in the starlit expanse behind us, he gave no sign. Yet there was an undeniable aura of fear which rode with us; it could not be gainsaid that our invasion of the tomb of the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred, had loosed forces beyond our power to foresee, and, too, the warning against molestation of the remains in the sarcophagus had been unmistakable, even though my employer had remained undaunted in the face of it. Clearly, if there were nothing in the desert between the Nameless City and ourselves, Professor Shrewsbury expected something to be there or to come from that shunned ruin so seldom trodden by the foot of man, for his attitude bespoke his fear—not of the minions of the Ancient Ones, for he feared them not, but of the powers which the Ancient Ones themselves could command and send forth to do their bidding.

Once there was a ghastly ululation far behind us, like a creature baying on our trail—but that sound came from no throat known to mankind; and at its sound the professor pressed his camel still more, and the beast itself, as if aware of an eldritch horror behind it, became more animated and heeded its driver. Yet, despite the manifest chill of the fear of unknown horror, we reached the camp at the oasis without incident. There we found that our guides and porters had deserted to a man, but they had providentially left behind them enough provisions to see us once again safely back in Salalah or Damqut.

That we did eventually reach Damqut seems to me now in retro-

spect evidence that, if we were being pursued, as I am convinced we were, we were also under a protection other than that afforded us by the grey five-pointed stones bearing the seal of the Elder Gods. It was on our fourth night out of the oasis below the Nameless City that I caught sight of something that flew between us and the stars. My employer was immediately apprehensive, but his sightless eyes through the strange power he had enabled him to identify our winged companions, for they flew ever in our vicinity.

"The Byakhee," he murmured, after an examination of the skies. "I had thought some of them must be in the vicinity of the Nameless City. For one moment, I feared it might be the Wind-Walker, Ithaqua, against whom I am afraid our talisman would be of no avail. But no—if these are here, there are others."

"Who follows us?" I asked.

"The dwellers of the city," he answered enigmatically.

"But there were no dwellers in the Nameless City," I protested.

"I thought you saw them rising from the gulf?"

"Those drawings—were they real?" I asked.

"Oh, yes—there was a civilization in that place which antedates mankind. Saurian and reptilian—followers of Cthulhu. I thought you had understood—the Nameless City was at one time a sea city, buried far under the ocean's surface eons ago, long before the upheaval which brought that portion of Arabia to the surface and sent the waters away, leaving the aquatic inhabitants of that world to die out of their element beneath the blazing sun which followed the cataclysm."

"What cataclysm?"

"I have no doubt it was the same which sank the lost continents of Atlantis and Mu. And that in turn may well have been the Deluge of the Christian Mythos. I assure you, Mr. Colum, there are many disturbing and provocative accounts in the ancient

books which are oddly corroborative of the oldest legends, persisting in one form or another from generation to generation. So the followers of Cthulhu perished here, save for those at the low-ermost depths, which give rise to water still, and also to the icy wind which courses upward to the desert and returns. There they are still, but of such nature that they are no longer subject to all our dimensional laws and pursue us in that same apparitional shape we saw before reaching the Nameless City."

Thereafter I watched for those curious saurian creatures, and indeed, they were all around us, appearing and disappearing with uncanny facility, offering us no difficulty beyond cutting off our third camel with some of our provisions, a loss which was somewhat alleviated by our purchase of provisions from a caravan encountered half way to Salalah en route to Oman. What happened to the beast, we did not know; it had been cut off during the night, but our own camels were unmolested, perhaps because they were closer to us than the third beast had been.

The Byakhee were visible on three nights between the oasis near the Nameless City and the port of Damqut. But they shunned civilization and its cities. Yet it was in the cities and along the coast that my employer most feared the menace of pursuit, and immediately upon reaching Salalah, he made an accurate copy of the precious map, and posted it to an address in London, following it with a second copy, posted to an address in Singapore, both to be held pending his arrival. The fragmentary manuscript, however, he retained on his person. Having done this, he faced the remainder of our trip with greater equanimity, though he was under no illusions as to the nature of our voyage.

And in this, certainly, he was not unduly pessimistic. For, though our journey from Damqut to Mukalla and finally Aden was comparatively peaceful and without the alarms which might

have been anticipated, the voyage from Aden into the Red Sea on our way to the Suez and the Mediterranean, was beset with all manner of difficulties. Almost at once, Professor Shrewsbury observed that the dockworkers busy loading the ship on which we had taken passage, the *Sana*, appeared to be curiously deformed, so that the majority of them gave the aspect of hopping and shuffling at their work rather than of walking in orthodox fashion. It was not too noticeable; undoubtedly most passersby who glanced at them saw nothing; but to a trained observer like my employer, the significance of the dockworkers' traits was not lost. It was possible, he explained, that their presence was nothing more than a coincidence; in Massachusetts, certain coastal towns harbored a surprising number of the descendants of a horrible experiment in cross-breeding between the natives and the Deep Ones; such experiments need not be considered to have been confined to one area of the globe, for these dockworkers strongly resembled certain residents of Innsmouth, Massachusetts, and the hill country around Dunwich, where other hybrid peoples once flourished.

But the dockworkers offered us no difficulties, and it was not until we were well out of Aden on our way up the Red Sea that my employer became conscious of the nature of our pursuit. He came to my cabin only last night, in marked agitation.

"You saw them?" he asked without preamble, referring to aquatic pursuers.

I nodded.

"The Deep Ones, certainly," he said. "But there is something more. Listen."

At first I heard nothing but the sound of the ship's passage; then, slowly, insidiously, I became aware of another sound, one that should not have been out on the sea, the shuddersome sound of ponderous steps moving through a great depth of swampy or

boggy soil, distant treading and sucking sounds.

"You hear?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"It is something other than the Deep Ones, something against whom our armor is too weak. You have the golden mead and the whistle? You remember the formula?"

I assured him that I did.

"Be prepared to use them. But the time is not yet."

* * * * *

It is now late in the following day. Early this afternoon a storm brewing from our rear burst upon us, and its fury has been mounting steadily ever since. Wind, lightning, thunder, and torrents of rain have engulfed the *Sana*, and the violence of the storm appears to be mounting. I have set down this account specifically so that such of my effects as are held in London will continue to be held pending word of my death, for my employer assures me that the time for that is not yet. He has made it clear, too, that it would seem to be a matter of making our escape or of permitting the needless sacrifice of everyone on board the *Sana*, which he intends to prevent.

Professor Shrewsbury has just looked in to say that it is time. He had taken some of the golden mead, he has his whistle ready. I can see him from where I sit writing, I can hear him shouting into the storm, "*Ia! Ia! Hastur! Hastur cf'ayak 'vulgtmm, vugtlagln, vulgtmm! Ai! Ai! Hastur!*" He stands upright against the fury of the storm, he falls back only before a lashing tentacle from the deep below.

And then the birds. Great God! what beings! What spawn of some forgotten hell!

But he mounts one of them, unafraid.

Something thrusts hard against the ship, something comes just too late to seize its prey.

I know what I must do. . . .

From the Log of the *Sana*:

The storm of Friday caused the loss of two passengers, Professor Laban Shrewsbury, and Nayland Colum, who were travelling together. Both were seen outside their cabins, despite the violence of the storm, and were presumed to have been swept off into the sea and drowned. Though the storm abated with remarkable suddenness immediately after the loss of these passengers, no trace of them could be found. The proper forms have been forwarded. . . .

V.

THE BLACK ISLAND

being

The Narrative of Horvath Blayne

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1.

THAT SOME RECORD of the events leading up to the so-called "top secret experiment" conducted at an uncharted South Pacific island on a September day in 1947 ought to be made, I have no question. That it would be wise is a moot point. There are some things against which the human race, which has in any event but a brief moment to remain on this planet to add to the brief moment of its previous existence, can be only inadequately forewarned and fore-armed; and, this being so, it is conceivable that it would be better to remain silent and let one's fellowmen wait upon events.

In final analysis, however, there are judges far better qualified than I, and the progression of events both before and since that "experiment" has been so disturbing and so suggestive of incredibly ancient evil almost beyond man's grasp that I am compelled to make this record before time dims these events—if ever it could—or before my own obliteration, which is inevitable, and may, indeed, be nearer than I think.

The episode began prosaically enough in the most famous bar in the world, in Singapore. . . .

I saw the five gentlemen sitting together when first I came into the bar and sat down. I was not far from them, and alone, and I looked at them casually, thinking that someone I knew might be among them. An elderly man with dark glasses and a strangely impressive countenance, and four young men, in late twenties or

early thirties, intent upon some discussion conducted with considerable animation. I recognized no one; so I looked away. I had sat there perhaps ten minutes, perhaps a little less; Henry Caravel had come up and spoken to me in passing, and we had taken note of the time together; he had just gone when I heard my name spoken.

"Perhaps Mr. Blayne could enlighten us?"

The voice was cordial, well-modulated, with a peculiar carrying power.

Looking up, I saw the five gentlemen at their table gazing toward me expectantly. At that instant, the old man stood.

"Our discussion is archeological in a sense, Mr. Blayne," he said directly. "If I may presume—I am Professor Laban Shrewsbury, a fellow American. Will you join us?"

I thanked him and, moved by a lively curiosity, went over to his table.

He introduced his companions—Andrew Phelan, Abel Keane, Claiborne Boyd, and Nayland Colum—and turned once more to me.

"Of course, we all know Horvath Blayne. We have been following with keen interest your papers on Angkor-Vat and the Khmer civilization, and, with even more interest, your studies among the ruins of Ponape. It is no coincidence that we are at the moment discussing the pantheon of Polynesian deities. Tell us, in your opinion, does the Polynesian sea-god, Tangaroa, have the same origin as Neptune?"

"Probably Hindu or Indo-Chinese in origin," I guessed.

"Those people are not primarily sea-farers," said the professor promptly. "There is a concept older than those civilizations, even if we concede at once that the Polynesian civilization is much younger than those of the Asiatic continent which gave rise to them. No, we are not interested so much in their relation to other figures in the pantheon, as to the conceit which gave them being

in the first place. And to its relation to so many batrachian or ichthyic figures and motifs which occur and recur in the art work, ancient and modern, to be found in the South Pacific islands."

I protested that I was not primarily an artist, and certainly could not presume to be a critic of art.

The professor brushed this aside with courteous detachment. "But you are familiar with art. And I wonder whether you can explain why the primitives of the South Pacific should emphasize the batrachian or ichthyic in their artifacts and arts, while the primitives of the North Pacific, for example, emphasize characteristics which are clearly avian. There are exceptions, of course; you will recognize them. The lizard figures of Easter Island and the batrachian pieces from Melanesia and Micronesia are common to these areas; the avian masks and headdresses of the North Pacific Indian tribes are common to the Canadian coast. But we find on occasion among those coastal Indian tribes disturbingly familiar motifs; consider, for instance, the markedly batrachian aspects of the shaman's headdress of the Haida tribe common to Prince of Wales Island and the ceremonial shark headdress of the Tlingit of Ketchikan, Alaska. The totems of the North Pacific Indians are primarily avian in concept, whereas such things as the ancestor figures carved into the tree-ferns of the New Hebrides quite clearly suggest aquatic dwellers."

I remarked that ancestor-worship was common to the Asiatic continent.

But this was not his principal thesis, which I recognized in the expectance with which his companions attended to him. He came to it presently. Apropos the sea-deities of primitive peoples, had I ever encountered in my archeological inquiries any of the legends pertaining to the mythological being, Cthulhu, whom he regarded as the progenitor of all sea-gods and the lesser deities connected with water as an element?

The comments he had made now fell into a distinct and well-

knit pattern. Cthulhu, as the ancient god of water, the seas, a water elemental in a sense, must be considered as the primal deity of the South Pacific, while the avian motifs expressed in the artifacts and works of art common to the North Pacific derived from a worship of an air elemental rather than one of the sea. I was indeed familiar with the Cthulhu Mythos, with its remarkable lore in essence so familiar to the Christian Mythos of the expulsion of Sathanus and his followers and their ever-ceaseless attempts to reconquer heaven.

The mythos, as I recalled it while listening to the professor speak engagingly of Cthulhu, turned on a conflict between beings known as the Elder Gods, who presumably inhabited the cosmos many light-years away, and lesser beings called the Ancient Ones or the Great Old Ones, who were presumably the motive forces of evil as opposed to those representing good, who were the benevolent Elder Gods. All had apparently existed in harmony at one time, but then a revolt on the part of the Ancient Ones—who were Cthulhu, master of the waters; Hastur, who roamed the interplanetary spaces before his imprisonment in the dark Lake of Hali; Yog-Sothoth, most powerful of the Ancient Ones; Ithaqua, the god of the winds; Tsathoggua and Shub-Niggurath, gods of the earth and of fecundity; Nyarlathotep, their dread messenger; and others—resulted in their vanquishment and banishment to various places in the universe, from which they hoped to rise once more against the Elder Gods, and where they were served by their minions, cults of men and animals reared in their service. There were, additionally, pertaining to Cthulhu, supposedly inhabiting a secret place on Earth, rather shockingly suggestive legends that certain of his batrachian followers, known as the Deep Ones, had mated with men and produced a horrible travesty of mankind known to be habitants of certain coastal Massachusetts towns.

Moreover, the Cthulhu Mythos had sprung from a collection of

incredibly old manuscripts and similar sources purporting to be factual accounts, though nothing was adduced to prove them anything other than fiction of a highly skilled order; these manuscripts and books—the *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred; the *Cultes des Goules*, the work of an eccentric French nobleman, the Count d'Erlette; the *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* of Von Junzt, a known aberrant who had roamed Europe and Asia in search of the remnants of old cults; the *Celeano Fragments*; the *R'lyeh Text*; the *Pnakotic Manuscript*; and the like—had been seized upon by writers of contemporary fiction and freely used as the source for incredible tales of fantasy and the macabre, and these had given a kind of aura of authenticity to what, at best, was a collection of lore and legends perhaps unique in the annals of mankind but surely little more.

"But you are skeptical, Mr. Blayne," observed the professor.

"I'm afraid I have the scientific mind," I answered.

"I rather think all of us here think similarly of ourselves," he said.

"Am I to understand that you believe in this volume of lore?"

He gazed at me disconcertingly from behind his dark spectacles. "Mr. Blayne, for more than three decades I have been on the trail of Cthulhu. Time after time I have believed that I have closed his avenues of ingress into our time; time after time I have been misled in thinking so."

"Then if you believe one aspect of the pantheon, you must believe all the rest," I countered.

"That is not necessarily so," he replied. "But there are wide areas of belief. I have seen and I know."

"I, too," said Phelan, and his supporting cry was echoed by the others.

The truly scientific mind is as hesitant to deprecate as it is to lend support. "Let us begin with the primal struggle between the

Elder Gods and the Great Old Ones," I said cautiously. "What is the nature of your evidence?"

"The sources are almost infinite. Consider almost all the ancient writings which speak of a great catastrophe which involved the earth. Look to the Old Testament, to the battle of Beth-Horon, led by Joshua. 'And he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed. . . .' Look to the *Annals of Cuauhtitlan* of the lore of the Nahua Indians of Mexico, which speak of an endless night, a tale verified by the Spanish priest, Fra. Bernadino de Sahagun, who, coming to the New World a generation after Columbus, told of the great catastrophe in which the sun rose but a little way over the horizon and then stood still, a catastrophe witnessed by the American Indians. And the Bible again: 'As they fled from before Israel . . . the Lord cast down great stones upon them in Azekah, and they died. . . .' There are parallel accounts in other ancient manuscripts—the *Popul Vuh* of the Mayas, the Egyptian *Papyrus Ipuwer*, the Buddhist *Visuddhi-Magga*, the Persian *Zend-Avesta*, the Hindu *Vedas*, many another. There are curiously coincidental records left in ancient art—the Venus tablets of Babylon, found in the ruins of the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, certain of the panoplies at Angkor-Vat, which you must know—and there are the strangely altered clocks of ancient times—the water clock of the Temple of Amon at Karnak, now inaccurate for day and night; the shadow clock of Fayum, Egypt, inaccurate, too; the astronomical panel in the tomb of Senmut, in which the stars are shown in an order they do not have, but which may presumably have been correct for Senmut's time. And these stars, I submit, are not just accidentally those of the Orion-Taurus group, held to be the seat of both the Elder Gods—who are believed to exist at or near Betelgeuze—and at least one of the Ancient Ones, Hastur; and were presumably home to all the Ancient Ones. So that the catastrophe duly recorded in the

old documents may very well have been evidence of the titanic battle which was waged between the Elder Gods and the rebellious Ancient Ones."

I pointed out that there was a current theory concerning erratic conduct on the part of the planet now called Venus.

Professor Shrewsbury shrugged this away almost with impatience. "Entertaining, but pure nonsense. The concept of Venus as a one-time comet can be disproved scientifically; the concept of the conflict between the Elder Gods and the Ancient Ones cannot. I submit, Mr. Blayne, that your actual conviction of disbelief is not as strong as your words."

In this he was eminently correct. What this strange old man had said had aroused and awakened a thousand latent memories, all of which now coalesced in the events of the moment. An archeologist cannot have seen the weird grotesques of Easter Island without a sense of an impending past; he cannot have looked upon Angkor-Vat or the shunned ruins of certain of the Marquesas Islands without a dim awareness of the terror that lurked in ancient places; he cannot have studied the legends of ancient peoples without recognizing that the lore of mankind, however exaggerated, takes root in some remote reality. Moreover, there was about my newly-found companions an air of gravity which was plain behind their good-nature, and was almost sinister without being malevolent. I could not doubt that these gentlemen were deadly serious, for each of them testified mutely that he had been on this quest for more than just a short time.

"You see," continued Professor Shrewsbury, "it would be folly to pretend that this meeting was an accident. Your movements had been studied enough to make it occur. It is just possible that in your studies of ancient ruins and the drawings, hieroglyphics, and other remains found among them, you may have happened upon something which might afford us a clue to the place we seek."

"And what is that?" I asked.

"An island." So saying, he unfolded before me a crudely-drawn map.

I examined the map with interest which was quickened appreciably when it dawned upon me that this was no ordinary map done by the hand of an ill-informed person, but rather a map drawn by someone who clearly believed in the objects he drew; that these objects were not placed as he had placed them suggested an artist of centuries ago.

"Java and Borneo," I said, identifying them. "These islands are apparently the Carolines and the marked place is northward. But the directions are not very clear."

"Yes, that is its drawback," agreed Professor Shrewsbury dryly.

I looked at him sharply. "Where did you get this, Professor?"

"From a very old man."

"He must have been very old indeed," I agreed.

"Almost fifteen centuries," he answered, without a smile. "But, come, do you recognize this place beyond the Carolines?"

I shook my head.

"Then we fall back upon your own research, Mr. Blayne. You have been in the South Pacific ever since the end of the Second World War. You have gone from island to island, and you will have seen certainly that in some areas there is a marked emphasis on the batrachian motif, or the ichthyic motif—it matters little, save that we have reason to believe one island at least to be either the focal point or near the focal point of the occurrence of artifacts and works of art stressing the batrachian."

"Ponape," I said.

He nodded, and the others waited expectantly.

"You see," he went on, "I have been to the Black Island which has no name and is uncharted because it is not always visible and rises to the surface only at rare intervals. But my means of travel

was somewhat unorthodox, my attempt to blast the island and its horrible ruins was ineffective; we must find it again, and we shall find it most readily by picking up the trail of the batrachian motif in Polynesian art."

"There are certain legends," I put in, "which speak of a vanishing land. It would presumably be stationary?"

"Yes, making its appearance only when upheavals of the ocean's bed thrust it up. And then evidently not for long. I need not remind you that there have been recent tremblors recorded by seismographs for the region of the South Pacific; conditions are thus ideal for our quest. We are at liberty to suppose it to be part of a larger, submerged land area, quite possibly one of the legendary continents."

"Mu," said Phelan.

"If Mu existed," countered the professor gravely.

"There is ample evidence to believe it did," I said, "together with Atlantis. If you were to fall back upon your own kind of evidence, there is plenty of legendry to give the belief body—the Bible's story of the Deluge, for instance; the ancient books' accounts of catastrophes, the submerging of vast land areas depicted in the drawings found at the sites of so much archeological discovery."

One of the professor's companions grinned and said, "You're entering into the spirit of it, Mr. Blayne."

The professor, however, gazed at me without smiling. "You believe in the existence of Mu, Mr. Blayne?"

"I'm afraid I do."

"And presumably also in the ancient civilizations said to have inhabited Mu and Atlantis," he went on. "There are certain legends attributable to some such lost civilizations, Mr. Blayne—particularly in relation to their sea deities—and there are survivals of ancient worship in the Balearics, in the islands of the Carolines,

at Innessmouth, Massachusetts, and in a few other widely separated areas. If Atlantis lay off the coast of Spain, and Mu near the Marshalls, presumably there might have been yet another land area at one time lying off the coast of Massachusetts. And the Black Island might be part of yet another land area; we cannot know. But it is certain that the Bible's Deluge and other similar legendary catastrophes might well have been evidence of the titanic struggle which resulted in the banishment of Cthulhu to one of the lost continents of this planet."

I nodded, aware for what seemed the first time of the intense scrutiny of the others.

"The Black Island is thus far the only known avenue directly to Cthulhu; all others are primarily in the possession of the Deep Ones. We must therefore search for it by every means at our disposal."

It was at this point of our conversation that I became aware of a subtle force vying with my interest, which was far keener than I had permitted myself to show; it was a blind feeling of hostility, an awareness, as it were, of something malign in the very atmosphere. I looked from one to another of them, but there was nothing in their eyes save only an interest similar to my own. Yet the aura of fear, of enmity, was unmistakable, perhaps made all the more so by its very tenuousness. I looked past my companions, allowing my glance to travel along the bar, among the tables; I saw no one who was even aware of us, though the bar, as always, was crowded with people of all nationalities in all walks of life. The conviction of hostility, the aura of fear persisted, lying against my consciousness as were it a tangible thing.

I gave my attention again to Professor Shrewsbury. He talked now of the trail of Cthulhu through the arts and crafts of primitive peoples, and his words conjured up from my own memories a thousand corroborating details—of the curious figures found in

the Sepik River valley of New Guinea; of the Tapa cloth designs of the Tonga islanders; of the hideously suggestive Fisherman's God of the Cook islanders, with its misshapen torso and its substitution of tentacles for legs and arms; of the stone *tiki* of the Marquesas, markedly batrachian in aspect; of the carvings of the New Zealand Maori, which depict creatures neither man nor octopus, neither fish nor frog, but something of all four; of the revolting war-shield design used by Queenslanders, a design of a labyrinth under water with a tortuously malefic figure at the end of it, tentacles extended as if for prey; and the similar shell pendants of the Papuans; of the ceremonial music of the Indonesias, particularly the Batak dream music, and the Wayang shadow-play of leather puppets on ancient themes dramatizing a legend of sea-beings. All these pointed unmistakably to Ponape from one direction, while the ceremonial figures used in some parts of the Hawaiian Islands and the great heads of Rano-raraku on Easter Island made a similar indication from the other.

Ponape, with its shunned ruins, its abandoned port in which the carvings are of unmistakable significance, carvings of brooding terror, of fish-men, of frog-men, of octopoids, all speaking mutely of a strange and terrible way of life led by inhabitants who were half-bestial, half-human. And from Ponape, where?

"You are thinking of Ponape," said Professor Shrewsbury quietly.

"Yes—and of what might lie beyond. If the Black Island is not between Ponape and Singapore, it must lie between that island and Easter Island."

"The only direction we have is that of the Johannsen narrative, discovered in Lovecraft, and subsequently repeated in the story of the disappearance of the H. M. S. *Advocate*. S. Latitude 47° 53', W. Longitude 127° 37'. That would be in the general area. But the latitude and longitude may not be correct; according to the Green-

bie account, that is the place at which the *Advocate* ran into a storm 'blowing something terrible'. There is thus a possibility of some error, since we have no way of knowing how far off course the ship may have been blown, nor how long a time elapsed since Greenbie last ascertained longitude and latitude. He makes note that they were steering 'a course straight for the Admiralties or New Guinea . . . but we saw by the stars that we were off course by west.'

"The Johannsen narrative. . . ."

I interrupted him. "Forgive me, I am not familiar with these accounts."

"My apologies. Of course, you could not be. They are not vital to your knowledge, but exist only as curiously corroborative statements. Or rather, as statements which are extremely suggestive in the light of what we know. If one has no belief in Cthulhu and the pantheon of Elder Gods and Ancient Ones, such accounts are meaningless, and all too readily dismissed as hysteria; if one keeps an open mind, however, such accounts become damnably suggestive. One cannot dismiss them."

"These accounts apart, and all else, too," I said, "what do you expect of me?"

"I submit that you are perhaps more qualified to speak with authority on the arts and artifacts of the South Pacific than anyone else within the entire region. We are satisfied that the primitive drawings and sculptures of these people will point unmistakably to the approximate location of the Black Island. Specifically, we are interested in the occurrence of any work similar to the Fisherman's God of Cook Island, which, we have reason to believe, is a representation, as seen by the primitive mind, of Cthulhu himself. By narrowing the circle of its incidence, it is logical to suppose that we can box in the site of the island."

I nodded thoughtfully, certain that I could almost effortlessly construct the ring that Professor Shrewsbury visualized.

"Can we count on you, Mr. Blayne?"

"More than that. If you have room for me, I'll join your party."

Professor Shrewsbury favored me with a long silent glance which I found somewhat disconcerting, but at last he said, "We have a place for you, Mr. Blayne. We hope to leave Singapore in two days." He gave me his card, writing rapidly on the back of it. "You will find me at this address if you need me."

2.

I took my leave of Professor Shrewsbury's party with curious misgivings. My offer to accompany them had been made almost involuntarily; I had had no intention of doing more than the professor had asked, but some impulse stronger than my own wish had impelled me instead to propose that I go with them to seek their goal. Once outside the bar, I asked myself why I had not doubted the professor's strange story; the evidence he had offered was purely circumstantial, and I could not have said that I had in fact ever come upon anything more to justify belief; and yet I found myself believing readily not only in the existence of the Black Island, but also in the vast mythology so sketchily outlined for me, in all that pantheon of Elder Gods and Ancient Ones of which that oddly persuasive and yet curiously repellent old man in the black glasses had spoken. Moreover, I recognized that my belief stemmed from something more than Professor Shrewsbury's words; it arose from a deep inner conviction, as if I had known all this long before but had either refused to acknowledge it or had failed to become aware of it because the proper opportunity for recognition had never arisen.

And yet I had always been strangely stirred at sight of just such art as Professor Shrewsbury had hinted at, and most of all, at the Cook Islanders' horribly suggestive Fisherman's God. What Pro-

fessor Shrewsbury had plainly intimated was that this work had had a living model; and of this I, despite my archeological training, had never entertained the shadow of a doubt. I could ask myself now to discover the reasons for my belief in the face of the previous record of dubeity I had established in my field; I could not answer, save to point to an inner conviction far stronger than any amount of cold rationalization. For it could not be denied that Professor Shrewsbury's analysis was not in itself factual, that the explanation for the various events and the nature of the evidence he projected were alike hypothetical in the extreme, that other solutions presented themselves as well, for the annals of primitive peoples are replete with many weird symbols and customs utterly unrelated to the living-patterns of contemporary man. But no challenge caused any wavering in my conviction. I knew, as if I had been there, that there was indeed an uncharted island near Ponape, that it was part of a sunken kingdom which might indeed have been R'lyeh and part of Mu, that it was the source of an incredible power, and no rationalization could explain either my conviction or my complete refusal to consider any other explanation of the tentative outline Professor Shrewsbury had offered. He, too, knew; the facts he had adduced were but the tiniest fraction of the adducible evidence.

And what impulse was it that sent me into the shadows to wait upon the emergence of Professor Shrewsbury and his companions? I could not say; yet I remained in a place of concealment until the five men left the bar, watching them come out. I had no impulse to follow, but I knew as by intuition that they would not be unattended, and they were not. Their followers walked at a respectable distance behind them—one, a second, yet another, at widely separated intervals.

I stepped out and faced one of them. He met my eyes questioningly for a moment, held my gaze, and looked away. A lascar, I

judged him, but oddly deformed, with a curiously suggestive head, foreshortened, with little brow, and repellently wide-mouthed, with scarcely a chin at all, but a sloping fold of skin that vanished into his neck. And his skin, too, was rough, warty. I felt no horror, looking at him. Perhaps Professor Shrewsbury's hints had prepared me for such an apparition, for I had known someone would be there. I was equally certain, however, that, for the present at least, my newly-found friends were in no danger.

I took myself off to my quarters presently, very thoughtful and preoccupied, for there was manifestly something more than Professor Shrewsbury's story and the quest of the five for the mythological Cthulhu to stir me. Once at my rooms, I found myself drawn to the packet of papers which had come down to me from my grandfather Waite—for my name had not always been Blayne, having undergone a change in the home of my foster-parents in Boston—my grandfather Asaph Waite, whom I had never consciously seen, and who perished with my grandmother, my father, and my mother in a disaster which had struck their town when I was yet only a babe in arms, and while I was on a visit with cousins in Boston who had forthwith adopted me after a loss which, to any other older child, would have been shockingly tragic.

My grandfather's papers were wrapped in oilskin—he had been a seafaring man out of Massachusetts, at one time an agent of the famous Marsh family, which for generations had been seafaring men, ranging far and wide over the face of the earth—and I had had them with me for years. I had examined the small packet from time to time, with curious stirrings and misgivings; tonight something Professor Shrewsbury had said had brought the papers back into my memory, and I wanted to look at them once more, without delay.

They consisted of fragments of an old diary—some pages had been torn out here and there; of fragmentary letters; a few docu-

ments, and some of what purported to be my grandfather's own writings entitled simply: *Invocations*, though down in one corner someone had added: *to Dagon*. The *Invocations* came to hand first. These were evidently intended as at least semi-poetry, and were written in a manner at times coherent, at others apparently incoherent—unless, as I was now prepared to admit, I lacked the proper key to understanding. I read but one of them, with considerably more care, however, than I had previously given it.

"By all the depths of Y'ha-nthlei—and the dwellers thereof,
for the One Over All;

"By the Sign of Kish—and all who obey it, for its Author;

"By the Door to Yhe—and all who use it, who have gone before
and who shall come after, for Him to Whom It Leadeth;

"By Him Who Is To Come . . .

"Ph'nglui mglw-nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah-nagl fhtagn."

I recognized in the final incomprehensible line, two of the names Dr. Shrewsbury had used, and I was even more disquieted than ever to discover them here in my possession, even if I had come by them in so casual a fashion.

I turned next to the diary, which was evidently, judging by notes pertinent to events of the day in the United States, for 1928. The entries were not frequent, but it was noteworthy that, after a beginning in which my grandfather had chronicled, journal-fashion, comments on the political and historical events of his time, his attention turned ever more and more to something mysterious and personal, to which the diary afforded no key. The entries pertinent to something which troubled my grandfather exceedingly began in late April of that year.

"April 23. Out to D. R. again last night, where saw what M. affirms is Him. Amorphous, tentacled, inhuman. Could I have expected other? M. extremely excited. Cannot say that I shared his excitement except that I found myself vacillating between M.'s

extreme on the one hand and an equal extremity of aversion on the other. A stormy night. Do not know where all this will lead.

"April 24. Took note of many boat losses in last night's storm. But none from here, though many were to D. R. So evidently we have been protected for another purpose which will be made plain in good time. Met M. on the street today; he took no notice of me, as if he did not know who I was. I understand now why he constantly wears the black gloves. If those who do not understand should *see!*

"April 27. A stranger in town, questioning old Zadok. The word has gone around that Z. will have to be dealt with. A pity. He seemed always such a harmless, garrulous old tosspot. Too garrulous, perhaps. But no one has heard him say anything. The stranger, they say, plied him with liquor."

There were similar entries, and other accounts of strange journeys to the place given only as D. R., evidently to be reached only by water—the Atlantic—but not far from the settlement, for there was no account of lengthy traveling over water to reach the goal from the town. These entries varied in intensity, but became steadily more and more chaotic; evidently the town had been seriously disturbed by the prying questions of a strange visitor to that clanish community. By late May, he was writing:

"May 21. Word passed around that a 'Federal Man' was asking questions in town today. Visited M.'s Refining Company. I have not seen him myself, but Obed mentioned seeing him. A short wiry man, very dark-skinned. A Southerner, perhaps. He supposedly comes directly from Washington. M. has cancelled the meeting tonight, and also a trip to D. R. Leopold was to have gone as the s. tonight. Now he will be passed over and the next one will be chosen.

"May 22. The sea very turbulent last night. Anger at D. R.? The trip should not have been postponed.

"May 23. Rumors grow. Gilman reported seeing a destroyer in

the vicinity of D. R. last evening, but no one else saw it. Gilman entirely too imaginative. Should be disciplined for adding to the growing discontent.

"May 27. Something wrong. More strangers in town. Also ships off the coast, apparently armed. The docks being examined by these tightlipped outsiders. Are they in reality Federal Men, or are they others—from H., for instance? How could we know? I have suggested it to M. but he says, no, they cannot be, he would 'feel' it if so. M. does not appear to be disturbed, but he is not entirely at his ease. Everyone is running to him.

"June. Z. has been taken care of, right under the noses of the Federal Men. What can they want? I am prevailing on J. to send the child off to Martha."

It was to this period of the diary to which one of the letters belonged; recognizing it, I had placed the letter to my foster-mother between the pages of the diary at this point; and I now opened it and read it once more.

"7th June 1928

"Dear Martha,

"I write in considerable haste because we have had to make decisions in a hurry here these past few days. Events have turned up so that it would be best to send Horvath to you for safekeeping. John and Abigail have agreed, however reluctantly; so I send him with Amos. It might be best to keep Amos with him for a week or two, until he can accustom himself to you and your way of existence there in Boston. Then Amos may come home again, though I do not need him at present, and if you have use for him, by all means retain him until it is convenient for you to send him back to us.

"Ever affectionately,
"Asaph Waite."

Comparatively few entries remained in the diary, and all were undated, appearing simply under "June." They were increasingly

disturbed, betraying what must have been my grandfather's extreme agitation.

"June. M. reports questions very upsetting. Bear directly on D. R. and the 'goings-on' there. Someone must have talked to the Federal Men. But who? If M. only knew, he would follow Z. There is no room here for traitors, and whoever it is will be hunted down and destroyed. And not only him alone, but all who are with him or who support him, including, if he is married, his wife and family.

"June. Questions about the 'rites' at Dagon Hall. Whoever talked *knows*.

"June. Large-scale operations at the docks. A destroyer out at D. R. Wild talk of government taking control of situation.

"June. It is true. Blasting begun, and fires have started to spread up from the docks. They will go out of control. Some have taken to the water, but the fire is cutting others off unless they go out of town and around it. . . ."

Reading these entries again, I found myself more disturbed than ever. The nature of the catastrophe which overtook my progenitors was still not clear. They might have been caught in the fires which followed the inexplicable "blasting"; they might have become involved in the blastings themselves. Whatever happened, the events which took place in that Massachusetts town had occurred in 1928; in that same year my parents and my grandparents had been killed in an unnamed catastrophe; it was not unwarranted to presume that these events were connected. The entries in my grandfather's diary actually revealed nothing save that some enterprise with which he was connected, evidently led by the man M., had attracted the attention of Federal agents who had invaded the town and taken corrective measures. There was no hint as to the nature of the enterprise, but presumably it was illegal, for nothing was set down in my grandfather's papers to identify it.

The remaining letters—there were but two others—were written also in June, 1928. One was to my foster-parents.

"10th June 1928.

"Dear Martha and Arvold,

"I have forwarded by mail out of Arkham a copy of my last will and testament, should anything happen to me, putting you down as executors and administrators of the trust fund I shall leave to Horvath. Apart from such fees as are set forth for you in the nature of a bequest, I have left all my property to my son and daughter-in-law, but in the event of their death, to Horvath. I hope I am not too pessimistic, but I do not believe in being inexcusably sanguine. The events of the past few days are not encouraging.

"As always,

"Asaph."

The second letter was undated, but by its nature it must have been written in June also; it was not an original, as were those to my foster-parents, but a copy my grandfather had evidently retained.

"Dear W.,

"A hasty note to let you know M. thinks all is lost for the present. He does not think damage can be done to Y'ha., but none of us knows. The place swarms with Federal Men. We think now it is all Zadok's doing, but Z. has been taken care of. We do not know who it was he talked to, but have reason to believe it was one of us. He will not escape. Though he was pursued up the tracks out of town and got away, he will be forever haunted by what he has done. Of course, you may say, as some have said, it would never have happened if the Marshes had kept away from those strange creatures at P., but the South Pacific is a long way from Massachusetts, and who would guess that they could make their way here to the reef. I am afraid now we are all getting what people call 'the Marsh look'. It is not attractive. I shall write no more, but I adjure you, if anything happens to us, and that may be, for this thing has so impressed the Federal Men that there is no semblance of a

trial here for anyone or any place they elect to destroy—do what you can for my grandson, Horvath Waite, whom you will find in the care of Mr. and Mrs. Arvold W. Blayne, in Boston.

“Asaph.”

These were the reactions of my grandfather Waite attendant upon the catastrophe which struck at his town and at him and his family in that summer of 1928. I had read these papers before, but never with such fascination. Perhaps it was the knowledge of these, which lay in memory, which accounted for my interest in the project which occupied Professor Shrewsbury. And yet I could not wholly believe that it was. Together with the conviction that within the boundaries of Professor Shrewsbury's quest lay the solution to the mystery which had dogged my grandfather was a haunting memory which loomed forever just on the perimeter of recognition, and it was this, however nameless and faceless, which motivated my deeper and more troubled concern with the trail of Cthulhu, for which I was about to surrender for the time being at least all my archeological research, my hopes and ambitions for my future in the field I had chosen for my own. The compulsion was stronger than my wish.

I put my grandfather's papers away once more, wrapping them in the oilskin in which they had come to my foster-parents, and then, far from tired, I set about to track down, even as Professor Shrewsbury had asked, the occurrence of certain hideously suggestive motifs in the art patterns of the South Pacific islanders, particularly the Fisherman's God of Cook Island. At this I worked steadily for more than two hours, consulting not only such references as I owned, but also my own voluminous notes and sketches. At the end of that time I realized that the Fisherman's God had made its appearance in one form or another as far to the south as Australia, as far to the north as the Kuriles, and between, in Cam-

bodia, Indo-China, Siam, and the Malay States; but I had affirmed also, as I had already foreseen, that the incidence of its occurrence was immeasurably greater in the vicinity of Ponape. However the circle were drawn, its center would be at or near Ponape; that the object of Professor Shrewsbury's quest lay in the immediate vicinity I had not a shred of doubt.

And that something inconceivably malign lay there in that hidden place, I had also no doubt. For it was from Ponape that the M. of my grandfather Waite's papers had come home, bringing in his aftermath the events which were to culminate in the tragedy of 1928. The recurrence of the island in the legends and corroborative accounts pertinent thereto was not an accident or chance; Ponape was the outpost of mankind's civilization, the outpost nearest the gate into the weird and terrible world of the Ancient Ones, of whom great Cthulhu alone lay forever sleeping, waiting upon the events which would some day rouse him from his centuries-old torpor and send him forth once more upon the unsuspecting peoples of the earth, forth to conquer and bring all the planet under his dominion.

3.

We shipped for Ponape on the second day, traveling by one of the regular steamers plying the islands. I had thought we were to have possession of a ship of our own, but Professor Shrewsbury offered in explanation that other arrangements had been made out of Ponape. We gathered together on the deck soon after leaving the docks, primarily for the purpose of comparing notes, and I discovered that all of them spoke most matter-of-factly of being under surveillance in Singapore.

"And you," Professor Shrewsbury turned to me. "Were you aware of being followed, Mr. Blayne?"

I shook my head. "But I had thought someone trailed after you," I admitted. "Who were they?"

"The Deep Ones," offered Phelan. "They are everywhere, but we've had other followers far more dangerous. The star protects us from them; they cannot harm us as long as we carry it."

"I have one for you, Mr. Blayne," said Professor Shrewsbury.

"Who are the Deep Ones?" I asked.

Professor Shrewsbury offered an immediate explanation. The Deep Ones, he said, were minions of Cthulhu. Originally they had been aquatic only—hideously suggestive of human beings, but essentially batrachian or ichthyic; but over a century ago certain American traders had come into the South Pacific and had formed alliances with the Deep Ones, mating with them and thus producing a hybrid breed which could exist equally well on land or in the sea; it was this hybrid breed which was to be found in most of the port cities of the world, never very far from water. That they were directed by some sort of super-intelligence from the sea seemed unquestionable, since they were never long in discovering any member of Professor Shrewsbury's party, all of whom had had previous encounters with the followers of Cthulhu—and, indeed, with certain minions of others of the Ancient Ones. Their purpose was clearly menacing, but the power of the five-pointed star, which was sealed with the seal of the Elder Gods, rendered them impotent. Should anyone of them fail to carry the star, however, he might fall victim to the Deep Ones, or to the Abominable Mi-Go, or to the Tcho-Tcho people, the Shoggoths, the Shantaks, or any among a score or more of those human and semi-human creatures dedicated to the service of the Ancient Ones.

Professor Shrewsbury excused himself to go to his cabin and bring me the star of which he had spoken. It was a rough-surfaced stone, grey in color, with a barely distinguishable seal representing a pillar of light, as closely as I could approximate it. It was not

large; it scarcely covered my palm, but it had a most peculiar effect on me, for it felt as if it burned my flesh, and I found it curiously repellent. I put it into my pocket, and there it seemed incredibly heavy; there, too, it left a burning sensation on my skin, despite the clothing between; it did not appear to have a similar effect on the others, as far as I could ascertain. Indeed, it became so heavy, presently, and afflicted me so sorely with the sensation of heat, that I found it necessary to excuse myself and hasten to my cabin so that I could remove the stone from my person and leave it among my possessions.

Only then did I feel free to rejoin my companions, where I took a listener's part in their discussion of events beyond my ken—not alone of Cthulhu and Hastur, and their minions, or of the others, not alone of the Elder Gods and that titanic battle which must have taken place aeons ago and involved countless universes, but of certain adventures these five had shared together, for they made countless references to ancient tablets, to books which, to judge by the dates which occurred in their conversation, had been made long before mankind had learned to write even on papyrus. They spoke repeatedly, too, of a "library" on "Celeano," which was beyond my ken. I was loath to ask, but I gathered that they had undergone a period of exile at what must have been certainly an archeologically priceless retreat, a city or library at a place called "Celeano," of which I knew nothing and was reluctant to admit ignorance of a site so archeologically ancient under a name I had hitherto associated only with the stars.

Their references to the Ancient Ones intimated too of feuds among these beings, between Hastur and Cthugha on the one hand, and Cthulhu and Ithaqua on the other; evidently these beings were united only against the Elder Gods, but vied with one another for the worship of their minions and the destruction or seduction of such inhabitants of their regions as came within their

orbits. I gathered, too, that Professor Shrewsbury and his companions had been drawn together often by mere chance, that all had been exposed to similar dangers, and all had eventually sought the haven which the professor had discovered many years before. It was somewhat disquieting, too, to reflect upon certain casual references made by the Professor to events in which he had a part but which had taken place much longer ago than could have been possible, considering his age; but I concluded, finally, that I must have been in error and misunderstood.

That night I had the first of the curiously disturbing dreams which haunted our voyage. Though I slept soundly enough, I was never free of dreams. I dreamed that night that I found myself in a great city deep in the sea. My subaqueous existence did not trouble me; I was able to breathe, move about as I pleased, and carry on a normal existence in the ocean's depths. The city, however, was not a modern city; it was ancient—quite possibly such a city as might have been visualized by an archeologist—far more ancient than any I had ever known before, with vast, monolithic buildings, on the walls of many of which had been emblazoned representations of the sun, the moon, the stars, and certain grotesquely horrible figments of the artist's imagination, some of them amazingly similar to the Fisherman's God of the Cook Islanders. Moreover, some of the buildings featured doorways of an unusual size, both in width and height, as were they constructed for beings beyond the conception of mankind.

I moved about among the city's streets and lanes unmolested, but I was not alone. Other human or semi-human beings became visible from time to time, most of them strangely batrachian in their aspects and movements, and my own locomotion was rather more batrachian than human. I saw presently that all the inhabitants were moving in one general direction, and I followed in their wake, joining the stream. Thus I came presently to a rise in

the sea-bottom, at the top of which stood a ruined building which was clearly a temple. The building was of black stone, of pieces suggesting the Egyptian pyramids; it was no longer intact, but had fallen away, disclosing beyond the great doorway a passage which struck downward, into the sea-bottom. Around this doorway, in a semi-circle, clustered the denizens of that ocean depth, I among them, waiting upon some event which was foreordained.

I grew aware of a chanting ululation rising from among them, but I could distinguish no words, for the language was not one I knew. Yet I had the conviction that I should know it, and several of the strange beings near me stared at me in a peculiarly revolting way, accusingly, as if I were guilty of some breach of conduct. But their attention was soon drawn away from me to that ruined doorway. Even while others were still joining the throng from the city below, a kind of glow began to come into being in the doorway, an oddly diffused light, not white or yellow, but pale green, lambent, like the movement of the curtain auroras, deepening in intensity as the moments passed. Then, deep in the heart of the passage, rising out of the light, came a great amorphous mass of flesh, preceded by incredibly long, lashing tentacles, a thing with the head of what might have been a gigantic human being in its upper half, and an octopoid creature below.

I caught but a single, horrified glimpse of it; then I screamed aloud and woke.

I lay for some time trying to ascertain the reason for being of the dream I had had. That it grew from my knowledge of the ancient legends, I could not doubt; but how could I account for my perspective in the dream? I was not an interloper, as I was in fact on my way to discover the point of egress for Cthulhu. Moreover, I was a witness to something more than was set down in any of the references or sources I had read, and nothing of what I had dreamed had been envisioned in anything Professor Shrewsbury had said.

But I puzzled over this problem in vain. The only explanation I could credit lay in the work of a perfervid imagination, which might conceivably have conjured up the substance of my dream. Lulled by the smooth movement of the ship, I drifted off into sleep once more, and again into dream.

This time, however, the setting was far different. I dreamed that I was a spectator at cataclysmic events far out among the constellations and galaxies. There a great battle was joined between beings far beyond the conceptions of a mere human being. They were great, constantly changing, masses of what appeared to be pure light—sometimes in the form of pillars, sometimes as great globes, sometimes as clouds; these masses struggled titanicallly with other masses likewise constantly changing not only in intensity and shape, but also in color. Their size was monstrous; compared to them, I had the size of an ant to a dinosaur. The battle raged in space, and from time to time one of the opponents of the pillars of light would be caught up and flung far outward, dwindling to the sight, and altering hideously in shape, taking on the aspect of a solid, fleshly form, yet undergoing unceasing metamorphosis.

Suddenly, in the midst of this interstellar engagement, it was as if a curtain had been drawn across the scene; it faded away abruptly, and slowly another took its place, or, rather, a succession of scenes—a strange, black-watered lake, lost among crags in an utterly alien landscape, certainly not terrestrial, with a boiling, churning disturbance in the water and the rising of a thing too hideous to be named; a bleak, dark, windswept landscape with snow-covered crags ringing in a great plateau, in the center of which rose a black structure suggesting a many-turretted castle, within which sat enthroned a quartet of sombre beings in the guise of men, attended by huge bat-winged birds; a sea-kingdom, a far cry from Carcassone, similar to that of which I had previously dreamed; a snowy landscape, suggestive of Canadian re-

gions, with a great shape striding across it, as on the wind, blotting out the stars, showing in their place great shining eyes, a grotesque caricature on mankind in the Arctic wastes.

These scenes passed before my eyes in dream with ever-increasing rapidity, and only one was remotely recognizable: a sea-coast town which, I was confident, was in Massachusetts or at least somewhere along the New England coast, and there I saw, moving about in its streets, people I remembered having seen far back in memory—particularly the always heavily veiled figure of the woman who had been my mother.

The dream ended at last. I woke again, far from sleep now, filled with a thousand perplexing questions, unable to know the meaning and significance of what I had seen in dream, the kaleidoscope of events utterly beyond my ken. I lay trying to thread them together, to evoke or create a common link; I could find none save the nebulous mythology of which Professor Shrewsbury had spoken in only the most superficial way.

I rose presently and went out on deck. The night was calm, a moon shone, the ship moved steadily through the south Pacific toward our goal. The hour was late, past midnight, and I stood at the rail watching the passing scene—the stars, wondering where, if any place, life such as mankind knew it existed; the sea, with the moonlight glinting and gleaming on the gently swelling water, wondering whether, indeed, there had ever existed the legendary sunken continents, whether cities had sunk beneath the sea's surface in ages gone by, and what denizens of the deep lurked in those depths as yet unknown to man.

Presently, however, the sound of our passage began to have a peculiarly illusory effect, and at the same time I was given to imagining that dark shapes swam with the ship, alongside, shapes in the guise, however distorted, of human beings; it seemed to my already overwrought mind that the very water seemed to whisper

my name: *Horvath Blayne! Horvath Blayne!* over and over, and it was then as if a dozen voices whispered back: *Horvath Waite! Horvath Waite!*, until at last I was overcome by the conviction that I should turn back, go away, return to my ancestral home, as if I did not know that it had been destroyed in the holocaust of 1928. So overpoweringly suggestive did this illusion become, that I turned at last and sought the comparative peace of my cabin, where I took once again to my berth, hoping this time for sleep undisturbed by any dream.

Then at last I slept.

4.

On our arrival at Ponape, our party was met by a grim-visaged American naval official in white uniform, who drew Professor Shrewsbury to one side and spoke briefly with him, while we waited, together with a shabby-looking seaman who seemed also to desire some words with the professor. This seaman presently caught the professor's eye; certainly Professor Shrewsbury did not resent the seaman's familiarity, and within a few moments he was walking at the Professor's side, talking animatedly in a dialect I did not clearly understand.

The professor listened to him but a short while. Then he halted our party and abruptly altered our immediate plans.

"Phelan and Blayne, come along with me. The rest of you go to our quarters. Keane, send for Brigadier-General Holberg, and ask him to see me."

Phelan and I therefore accompanied Professor Shrewsbury and his rough companion, who led the way through devious streets and lanes to a building which was assuredly little more than a hovel. Lying on a pallet there, another seaman awaited us. Both

men had evidently had foreknowledge of our arrival, for the Professor had sent ahead months ago for any lore of a mysterious island which rose on occasion and vanished as strangely. It was manifestly such knowledge as the ailing seaman wished now to impart.

His name was Satsume Sereke; he was of Japanese extraction, but clearly of mixed blood, and of more than usual education. He was approaching middle age, but looked older. He had been a hand on a tramp steamer, the *Yokohama*, out of Hongkong; the steamer had been wrecked and he had been one of the men in a life-boat. Before permitting him to go farther, Professor Shrewsbury now asked us to take careful note of what Sereke said. The account I set down differed in no detail from Phelan's. We made no attempt, of course, to reproduce the exact language of the ailing man.

"Our course was for Ponape. Bailey had a compass, and so we knew about where we were going. The first night after the storm we were moving along all right—Henderson and Melik were at the oars, with Spolito and Yohira—it was clear, we had enough food and water, nobody dreaming anything, I mean—we saw something in the water. We thought it was sharks or porpoises, maybe marlins, we couldn't see well enough. It was dark, and they stayed away from the boat, just followed us and went along with us. Along about my watch, they came closer. They had a funny look, like they had arms and legs instead of fins and a tail, but they were up and down so much you couldn't be sure. Then, quicker than a cat, something reached over into the boat and got Spolito—just pulled him out; he screamed, and Melik reached out for him, but he was gone before Melik could get to him. Melik said he saw something like a webbed hand; he was near crazy with fear after-

ward; Spolito just went down and never came up again. All our followers were gone quick; then they came back, an hour later, and that time they got Yohira the same way. After that nothing more, and when morning came we saw the island.

"It was an island, where none was before. There was nothing growing on it, and it was black with muck, I think. But there were remains of buildings on it, buildings like I never saw before, with big, odd-shaped blocks of stone. There was an open door, very large, partly broken away. Henderson had the glasses, and he got a good look. Then he passed them around. Henderson wanted to go to the place, but I didn't. Well, he talked, and Mason, Melik, and Gunders decided to go ashore; Benton and I held back, and the way we settled it was we rowed over, and Benton and I stayed in the boat with the glasses to watch the others.

"They got out and sloshed through the muck and seaweed to the stones, and then they went on to that doorway. All four of them were there, and I was looking at them through the glasses. I don't know how it happened, but something big and black just puffed out of that doorway and fell on the four of them. It pulled back with a horrible sucking noise, but Henderson and Mason and the others were gone. Benton had seen it, too, but not as clear. I didn't go to look, I didn't want to see any more. We rowed as fast as we could and got away from there. We never stopped rowing until the freighter *Rhineland* picked us up."

"Did you set down the latitude and longitude of the island?" asked Professor Shrewsbury.

"No. But we lost the ship at about South Latitude 49° 51', West Longitude 128° 34'. It is toward Ponape from there, but not close to Ponape."

"You saw this thing in the morning, by daylight?"

"Yes, but there were fogs—green fogs; it was not clear."

"How far out of Ponape?"

"Perhaps a day."

Professor Shrewsbury succeeded in establishing no more. Nevertheless, he appeared pleased; he paused only long enough to ascertain that Sereke would recover from the shock and exhaustion which gripped him; then he returned to the quarters he had arranged for us.

There we found Brigadier-General Holberg, a grim, grey-haired man of approximately sixty, waiting for us. Immediately after introductions had been exchanged, he came to the subject of his presence and his reason for it.

"I have been told to place myself at your disposal, Professor Shrewsbury, by an authority I cannot very well disregard." He smiled frostily. "Operation Ponape is apparently your personal project, sir."

"You have been given some of the documents to read, surely?"

"I have read the documents, yes. I have no comment to make. This is your field, not mine. I have a destroyer ready for your use as soon as you wish to come aboard. A carrier is within call, and the weapon is in readiness, subject to my order. I understand you will attempt destruction with other weapons first?"

"That is the plan, yes."

"When do you expect to leave Ponape, sir?"

"Within a week, General."

"Very good. We shall be at your disposal."

The events of that week on Ponape were essentially trivial, concerning primarily the amassing of powerful explosive weapons for use on the Black Island, if indeed we could find that uncharted land area. But behind these superficial tasks loomed something profoundly disturbing. It was not alone the undeniable fact that

we were under surveillance; we had come to expect that. It was not only that we were constantly aware of an impending task of singular magnitude; this too was to be expected. No, it was something more, it was the consciousness of the proximity of a vast and primeval power, which gave off a malignance almost tangible. All of us felt this; I alone felt something more.

Yet I could not define the intangible fear under which I labored. It was far more than fear of the evil that lurked in the sea off Ponape; it was something that reached to the every well-springs of my being, something integral in my essential self, something that was omnipresent like a pulsing undercurrent in my very blood and bone. Try as I might, I could not rid myself of it; I regretted a thousand times having yielded to Professor Shrewsbury's invitation that evening in Singapore, which already seemed incredibly far away. This cloud hung over me without alleviation day after day until the day of our departure from Ponape.

That day dawned sultry and hot—and, for me, filled with foreboding. We set out early on the destroyer *Hamilton*, with General Holberg aboard. Professor Shrewsbury had worked out a course; he had had further discussions with the seaman, Sereke, and he had arrived at an approximate location. Nor, I gathered, had the General been idle; aeroplanes had been scouting the sea in the vicinity of the place where the *Yokohama* had gone down, and one pilot had reported seeing a curiously fog-shrouded area in the sea; no land had been visible, but the occurrence of an unmoving mass of fog was in itself strange enough to command attention. The latitude and longitude had been sent in, and it was for this spot that the *Hamilton* set out.

Despite my forebodings, however, our journey was singularly uneventful. The clouds which had obscured the sun at dawn drew away by mid-day; the sultriness, too, vanished and gave way to a clear, less humid atmosphere. An air of excitement prevailed, a

kind of tension which we all shared, except for the General, whose manner was that of a military man obeying an order without quite believing in its necessity. He and the professor held some colloquy on the destructiveness of modern warfare. And what, Professor Shrewsbury wanted to know, was likely to happen to so small a land area as the Black Island?

"Wiped out," said the General laconically.

"I wonder," answered the professor. "We shall see."

I do not know whether I actually expected the destroyer to reach the Black Island; certainly I did not share the General's calm confidence. But in late afternoon of that day we sighted an uncharted island, and within a short time we were lowering a boat containing Professor Shrewsbury, Phelan, Keane, and myself; a second boat carried paraphernalia together with Boyd and Colum, and two men from the destroyer. Significantly, the ship's guns were trained on the structure just visible on the island.

It did not surprise me to find the Black Island to be the temple peak of my dream. Here it was, exactly as I had seen it, with the carven door open and the mouth of that great portal yawning to the sun despite an aura of mist which lay greenly over everything. The ruins were breathtaking, though plainly ravaged by quakes and, quite clearly, by explosives, whose ineffectual damage differed from that greater damage of earthquake, which had burst asunder many of the angles of the colossal stone building. The stones, like the soil, were black, and forbidding; and their surfaces were covered with terrible hieroglyphs and shocking images. The building was composed of angles and planes which were non-Euclidean, hinting horribly of alien dimensions and spheres, as had this building and what remained of the sunken city beyond it been constructed by non-terrestrials.

Professor Shrewsbury cautioned us before we landed.

"I believe Sereke's story to be substantially true," he said, "and

I have no hope that this attack will seal the opening or destroy its guardians. We must therefore be prepared to flee at the slightest suggestion that something is rising from below. We need not fear anything other which might appear; the stones will protect us from them; but if He who waits dreaming below rises, we dare not linger. Let us therefore lose no time in mining the portal."

The surface of the island was cloying. The muck had not yet been exposed sufficiently to the sun to be dried; moreover, the pale green mists which continued to hang about the island were humid and faintly malodorous, not alone of the exposed surfaces of something long under water, but of something more, an animal-like smell which was neither a musk nor a pungence, but a cloying, almost charnel smell. The atmosphere of the island differed sharply from that of the surrounding sea; perhaps it was the cloying smell, perhaps the humidity, perhaps the exhalation of the ancient stones. And over all hung an aura of dread, all the more inexplicable for the still brightly-shining sun, and the protective presence of the *Hamilton*, lying not far off shore.

We worked rapidly. Nevertheless, none of us could escape the growing sense of malevolence which was manifest. The aura of dread which clung to the island heightened steadily, apprehension of some impending horror increased; there was a mounting tension among us, despite the fact that Professor Shrewsbury maintained a ceaseless vigilance at the very threshold of the yawning cavern, ingress to which was afforded by the broken doorway; it was plain to see that he expected danger from this source, if no other, though the very waters around the island were fraught with peril, if Sereke's story were uncolored by his imagination.

At the same time I was agonizingly aware of inimical forces which seemed almost personal; I felt them physically, quite apart from the chaotic confusion of my thoughts. In truth, the island affected me profoundly, and its effect was cumulative, not only

fear but a deep depression of my spirits, not only apprehension but a basic disorder of such a nature as to stir up within me a conflict, of the significance of which I was not cognizant, but a conflict which was alarmingly disorganizing, so that I found myself at one and the same time eager to help and anxious to impede or destroy the work being done by my companions.

It was almost with relief that I heard the professor's abrupt cry, "He is coming!"

I looked up. There was a faint green luminosity showing far down the well of dark within the portal, just such a luminosity as I had seen in my dream. I knew, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that what would emerge from that maw would be akin to the being seen in my dream, also, a terrifyingly horrible caricature of an octopoid creature with the grotesquely gigantic half-head of a human being. And for one instant I was moved, not to follow the others, who were already on their way down to the boats, carrying the detonator for the explosives which had been laid all about the portal, but to hurl myself down into that pit of darkness, down the monolithic steps, to that nether place in accursed R'lyeh where Great Cthulhu lay dreaming, waiting his time to rise once more and seize the waters and the lands of Earth.

The moment broke. I turned at Professor Shrewsbury's sharp call, and followed, with the malevolence of that charnel place rising behind me like a cloud, and with the horrible conviction that I was marked as the especial victim of that ghastly being making its way out of the depths below that eldrich temple. I was the last of them to reach the boats, and at once we pushed off for the destroyer.

It was still light, though the day was now far gone. The sun had not yet gone down, so that what took place on that awe-inspiring island was plainly visible to all of us. We had moved as far out into the sea as the wires to the explosives permitted. There we waited upon Professor Shrewsbury's order to detonate the explo-

sives, and we were accordingly given the opportunity to see the emergence of the ghastly being from the depths.

The first movement was of tentacles, which came oozing forth from the opening, slithering over the great rocks, accompanied by a horrible sloshing, sucking sound, as of great footsteps in the bowls of earth. Then abruptly there loomed within the portal, preceded by an emanation of green light, a thing which was little more than a protoplasmic mass, from the body of which a thousand tentacles of every length and thickness flailed forth, from the head of which, constantly altering in shape from an amorphous bulge to a simulacrum of a man's head, a single malevolent eye peered. A shocking sound as of retching, accompanied by ululations and a fluted whistling, came to us across the water.

I closed my eyes; I could not bear to see in reality the horror I had seen in dream so short a time ago.

At that instant, Professor Shrewsbury gave the signal.

The explosives burst with a tremendous concussion. What had survived that earlier explosion, including now the portal itself, burst upward and outward. The thing in the doorway, too, was torn open, and in a few moments, portions of the stone blocks fell upon it, further shattering it. But, chillingly, when the sound of the explosion had died away, there came to our ears still, without change, the ululations and the whistling and the retching sounds we had heard. And there, before our eyes, the shattered mass of the thing from the depths, was flowing together like water, *re-forming*, shaping itself anew once more!

Professor Shrewsbury's face was grim, but he did not hesitate. He ordered the boats returned to the destroyer at once; what we had seen lent strength and purpose to our arms, and we reached the *Hamilton* within a very short time.

General Holberg, glasses in hand, faced us on the top deck. "A shocking thing, Professor Shrewsbury. Must it be the weapon?"

Professor Shrewsbury nodded silently.

General Holberg raised one arm aloft.

"Now let us watch," he said.

The thing on the island was still growing. It towered now above the ruins, expanding into the heavens, beginning to flow down to the water's edge.

"Horrible, horrible," murmured General Holberg. "What in God's name is it?"

"Perhaps something from an alien dimension," replied the professor wearily. "No one knows. It may be that even the weapon is powerless against it."

"Nothing can resist that, sir."

"The military mind," murmured the professor.

The *Hamilton* was moving away, gathering speed.

"How long will it take, General?"

"The carrier will have had our signal by this time; the 'plane was loaded. It should not take longer than it takes us to reach the limit of safety."

On the island a great black mass stood out against the setting sun, diminishing now only because we were moving so rapidly away from it. Presently the island itself was lost, and only the suggestive black mass remained, dark upon the heavens.

Overhead roared an aeroplane, making for the island.

"There it goes," cried General Holberg. "Please look away. Even at this distance the light will be blinding."

We turned obediently.

In a few moments the sound came, shockingly. In another few seconds the force of the explosion struck us like a physical blow. It seemed a long time before the General spoke again.

"Look now, if you like."

We turned.

Over the place where the Black Island had been loomed now a gigantic cloud, mushrooming and billowing skyward, a cloud greater than the size of the island itself, of white and grey and tan

colors, beautiful in itself to see. And I knew what the "weapon" had been, remembering Hiroshima and the Bikini experiment, I knew what a titanic force had fallen upon that hideously menacing island risen from the Pacific for the last time only to be blown asunder with all that it contained, forever.

"I rather think it cannot have survived that," said General Holberg calmly.

"I pray Heaven you are right," said Professor Shrewsbury firmly.

I remember now, after all these months, how sober and grave Professor Shrewsbury was at our parting. I remember how he said something in sympathy, and I did not then understand it, but since then I have come to know that somehow, despite the fact that behind those black glasses he always wore, that strange and wise man had no eyes with which to see, and yet saw, he saw more than I myself knew about myself.

I think of this now often. We parted where we had met, at Singapore. From Singapore I went back to Cambodia, then to Calcutta, then to Tibet and back to the coast, from which I took ship for America, driven now by more than curiosity about archeology, by an insistence upon knowing more of myself, of my father and mother, of my grandparents. We parted as friends, united by a common bond. Professor Shrewsbury's words had been hopeful, yet faintly prophetic. Perhaps, he had said, *He* had died in the atomic blast; but we must recognize, he had insisted, that something from an alien dimension, something from another planet, might not be subject to our natural laws; one could only hope. His work was either done or had gone as far as it could go, short of ceaseless vigilance to stop up temporarily every avenue to the open that might be attempted by Cthulhu or those who followed him, who worshipped him and did the bidding of the Ancient Ones.

Because I alone, of the six of us, had no doubt. Not of the death

and disintegration of the thing on the Black Island, but of its survival. I knew by an intuition I could not then explain that R'lyeh still stood in its depths, wounded but not destroyed, that the dweller in those subaqueous depths still existed in whatever form he chose to assume, that his worshippers still bowed in submission to him from every sea and port in the world.

I went home to find out why I had had what I recognized as a feeling of kinship for the Deep Ones, for the thing that lived in the sunken realm of R'lyeh, for Cthulhu, of whom it was once said and is still said, and will be said until the coming again, "*Pb'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah-nagl fhtagn.*" I went home to Massachusetts to discover why my mother went veiled for most of her life, to learn what it meant to be one of the Waites of Innsmouth, destroyed by the Federals in 1928 to wipe out the accursed plague which had come upon the inhabitants, including the Waites who were my grandparents and my parents.

For their blood flows in my veins, the blood of the Deep Ones, the spawn of that black mating in the South Pacific. And I know that I have earned their especial hatred as a traitor to that blood, for even now I feel the longing to descend into the depths, to make my way to the glory of Y'ha-nthlei where it lies in the Atlantic off Devil's Reef beyond Innsmouth, to the splendor of R'lyeh in the waters near Ponape, and even now I know the fear of going to them with the taste of treachery in my mouth.

At night I hear them, calling, "*Horvath Waite. Horvath Waite!*"

And I wonder how long it will be before they seek me out and find me.

For it was vain to hope, as Professor Shrewsbury did, that Cthulhu could have been vanquished so easily. The battle of the Elder Gods had been far greater, far more titanic than even that impressive bomb which had erased the Black Island from the face of the Pacific that memorable day. And that interstellar battle had

lasted long before victory was won by the Elder Gods, who were all-powerful, who were great above all others and banished the Ancient Ones to outer darkness forever.

For weeks after my shocking discovery, I asked myself which one of us would be the first to be discovered. I asked myself how it would be brought about—certainly by no crude means, no alarming crime which might startle into renewed activity Professor Shrewsbury and Andrew Phelan and the others.

And today the papers brought me an answer.

"Gloucester, Mass.—The Rev. Abel Keane, a newly ordained clergyman, was drowned today while swimming near Gloucester. He had been accounted an excellent swimmer, but went down within sight of many other bathers. His body has not yet been recovered. . . ."

Now I ask myself who will be next?

And how long will it be in the endless progression of days before those who serve Him will summon me to atonement in those black depths where Great Cthulhu lies dreaming, waiting upon his time to rise again and take possession of the lands and the seas and all that lives within them, once more as before, once more and forever?

A Note on the Cthulhu Mythos

The Cthulhu Mythos is a myth-pattern developed gradually by the late H. P. Lovecraft in the final phase of his creative work in the genre of the macabre. Lovecraft saw it as "based on the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practising black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside ever ready to take possession of this earth again." Its similarity to the Christian mythos—as well as to other myth-patterns common to both history and fiction—will be immediately apparent to the literate reader.

The Mythos was evolved very slowly, and there is much to indicate that in its initial stages at least, Lovecraft had no intention or plan to bring the Cthulhu Mythos into being as finally it did take shape. Its pattern grew piecemeal and finally took shape in definite form as Lovecraft himself became aware of the panoply of deities, books, place-names, and the other trappings of the Mythos which were already implicit in the stories he had written. There is, in fact, no hard and fast line separating Lovecraft's Dunsanian tales from the stories which are definitely part of the Mythos, though these latter may be said to have begun with *The Nameless City*, in which the *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred first makes its appearance, and to have ended, chronologically, with *The Thing*

on the Doorstep. It was given its first indication of shape in *The Call of Cthulhu*.

The deities of Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos consisted first of the Elder Gods, which, though beyond mundane morality, beyond "good" and "evil," were nevertheless proponents of order and thus represented the forces of enlightenment as against the forces of evil, represented by the Ancient Ones or the Great Old Ones, who rebelled against the Elder Gods, and were thrust—like Satan—into outer darkness. The Elder Gods (only one of whom, Nodens, Lord of the Great Abyss, is given a name) existed at or near Betelgeuze in the constellation Orion, very rarely stirring forth to intervene in the incessant struggle between the powers of darkness, seeking to gain control, and the races of Earth. The Ancient Ones, who make terrifying appearances in Lovecraft's tales, were led by the blind idiot god, Azathoth—an "amorphous blight of nethermost confusion which blasphemes and bubbles at the center of all infinity"—and included Yog-Sothoth, sharer of Azathoth's dominion, a being not subject to the laws of time and space, but co-existent with all time and conterminous with all space, Nyarlathotep, the Messenger, Great Cthulhu, banished to hidden R'lyeh in the depths of the sea, Hastur the Unspeakable, exiled to the Hyades, Shub-Niggurath, "the black goat of the woods with a thousand young"—suggesting parallels to the elementals of air, earth, water, etc.

There has been some suggestion on the part of commentators and critics—among whom Colin Wilson is the most recent (see *The Strength to Dream*)—that Lovecraft took the Cthulhu Mythos seriously. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Lovecraft created his Mythos as pure entertainment, no more. It was not wholly original, for he freely borrowed trivial but colorful details from other writers—Poe, Arthur Machen, Lord Dunsany, Ambrose Bierce, Robert W. Chambers—and, to expand his original concepts, he

urged other writers to add to the panoply of deities, to the pre-human races and the contemporary hybrid races serving them (like the Deep Ones, the Abominable Snow-Men of Mi-Go, etc.), the place-names (like Kadath in the Cold Waste, the Plateau of Leng, and those Massachusetts towns corresponding to Marblehead, Wilbraham, and Salem—Kingsport, Dunwich, and Arkham, —which was adopted for the imprint of Arkham House), the shunned books, so rarely found (like the *Necronomicon*, the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*, the *Dhol Chants*, the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*, the *R'lyeh Text*, etc.).

In this manner the Cthulhu Mythos grew. The primary stories of the Cthulhu Mythos by Lovecraft were thirteen in number—*The Nameless City*, *The Festival*, *The Call of Cthulhu*, *The Colour out of Space*, *The Dunwich Horror*, *The Whisperer in Darkness*, *The Dreams in the Witch-House*, *The Haunter of the Dark*, *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, *The Shadow out of Time*, *At the Mountains of Madness*, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, and *The Thing on the Doorstep*. To these, other writers added almost a hundred more stories, sometimes expanding the Mythos with deities, place-names, books, etc., of their own invention, sometimes working within Lovecraft's original pattern—writers like Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, August Derleth, Robert Bloch, Henry Kuttner, and, most recently, J. Ramsey Campbell, who constructed an entire milieu in England paralleling the Arkham-Dunwich-Kingsport setting in Massachusetts.

Thus, to the original Lovecraft collections containing stories in the Cthulhu Mythos were shortly added books by other writers further expanding the Mythos—Frank Belknap Long's *The Hounds of Tindalos* and *The Horror from the Hills*; Clark Ashton Smith's *Out of Space and Time*, *Lost Worlds*, *Genius Loci and Other Tales*, *The Abominations of Yondo*, August Derleth's *The Lurker*

at the Threshold, The Survivor and Others, Something Near, Someone in the Dark, The Mask of Cthulhu, and the present volume; Robert Bloch's *The Opener of the Way*; and lesser, uncollected stories by these and other writers.

Lovecraft took pleasure in this *outré* world of his creation just as, in his childhood, he had delighted in recreating the world of ancient Greece and in his youth that of eighteenth century England. Early in the Cthulhu Mythos stories occurred a quotation from Algernon Blackwood which sets the mood—"Of such great powers or beings there may be conceivably a survival . . . a survival of a hugely remote period when . . . consciousness was manifested, perhaps, in shapes and forms long since withdrawn before the tide of advancing humanity . . . forms of which poetry and legend alone have caught a flying memory and called them gods, monsters, mythical beings of all sorts and kinds." Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos was his own imaginary "flying memory," intended for nothing more than his own entertainment and that of the growing audience, which, familiar with the stories as they appeared in *Weird Tales*, clamored for more. In sum, the Cthulhu Mythos stories are minor but curiously interesting tales in the Gothic tradition, and that readers should actually have presented themselves at bookstores and libraries in search of the imaginary books of the Mythos would have amazed Lovecraft as much as it would have offered him new evidence of the gullibility of many people before the printed word.

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